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THE WATER-BABIES

A FAIRY TALE FOR A LAND-BABY

BY
✓
CHARLES KINGSLEY
"

EDITED AND ABRIDGED

BY
EDNA H. TURPIN



NEW YORK

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

CHARLES KINGSLEY, clergyman, politician, poet, and naturalist, was born at Holne, in Devonshire, England, June 12, 1819. After attending preparatory schools, he went to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he obtained a scholarship in his first year. July 6, 1839, on a visit to Oxfordshire he met his future wife, Miss Fanny Grenfell. "That," he said, "was my real wedding day." After taking his degree at Cambridge, he went to Eversley as curate; he was afterward made rector of that parish, and there thirty-three years of his busy, happy life were spent.

In 1848 he published his first book, *The Saint's Tragedy*, a dramatization of the legend of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. About this time he was led by conscientious motives to resign his office of clerk in orders in his father's parish, and he turned to literature to meet increasing expenses and decreased income. In the next ten years his best novels were published, *Yeast*, *Alton Locke*, *Hypatia*, *Westward Ho!* and *Two Years Ago*. His writings, however, were inspired by other than sordid motives. *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, written with the ardor of youthful conviction, express his sympathy with the movement of Christian Socialism of which Maurice was leader. *Hypatia*, an historical romance of Egypt in the fifth century, and *Westward Ho!* the scene of which is laid in the Elizabethan times, are energetic in action and brilliant in description, and, despite anachronisms, rank among the finest English historical novels.

Kingsley was appointed Professor of Modern Languages at Cambridge in 1860. In the spring of 1862 *Water-Babies* was written in fulfillment of his promise "to make a book" for his little son, Arthur. His other child-classic, *The Heroes*, a collection of Greek fairy tales, had been published some years before. Writing of *Water-Babies* to Maurice, Kingsley said: "I have tried in all sorts of queer ways to make children and grown folks divine that there is a quite miraculous and divine element underlying all physical nature." The exquisite fairy

tale is full of scientific and moral truth. For instance, "the fact of the natural selection of species is forcibly taught; Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid represents the universal providence of God, which is but another form of divine love, the motive if not the agency of the various transformations described."

In 1873 Kingsley gave up his canonry at Chester for a vacant stall at Westminster Abbey. Six months of the next year were spent in America. While in Colorado he had a severe illness from which he never entirely recovered, and he died of pneumonia at Eversley, January 23, 1875. A grave in Westminster Abbey was tendered for him, but those who knew the desires of his heart declined it, and his loving villagers bore him to his rest in Eversley churchyard.

Kingsley is often called "the Apostle of Muscular Christianity." He had a high appreciation of the height which Christian manhood should attain, and he insisted strenuously on the duty of man to maintain a sound mind in a sound body. He himself was a splendid specimen of manhood, physical, mental, spiritual. Maurice said that of all men he had ever known Kingsley was the best son, the best father, the best husband, the best friend, and the best parish priest. Instead of feeling that by exalted talents he was exempt from humble duties he was most scrupulous in their performance. He had a life-long sympathy with the lowly and suffering. One of his best writings is a sermon on the *Message of the Church to the Working Man*.

All his writings are pure and manly. As a novelist his chief power lies in his descriptive talent. There are in the whole range of English literature few finer word-pictures than his descriptions of English, South American, and Egyptian scenery. His pictures of foreign deserts and tropical forests are as vivid as those of his own familiar North Devon scenes. "Kingsley had imagination, feeling, some insight, a great affection for man and nature, a true interest in things as they are and ought to be—above all, as they ought to be!"—*Henley*.

NOTE.—The text has been abridged by the omission of digressions dealing with scientific matters beyond the range of young people, and the story thereby is made more suitable for supplementary reading. The author's language is unchanged and the thread of the narrative unbroken.

THE WATER-BABIES

CHAPTER I

1. ONCE upon a time there was a little chimney-sweep,¹ and his name was Tom. That is a short name, and you have heard it before, so you will not have much trouble in remembering it. He lived in a great town in the North country,² where there were plenty of chimneys to sweep, and plenty of money for Tom to earn and his master to spend. He could not read nor write, and did not care to do either; and he never washed himself, for there was no water up the court where he lived. He had never been taught to say his prayers. He never had heard of God, or of Christ, except in words which you never have heard, and which it would have been well if he had never heard.

2. He cried half his time, and laughed the other half. He cried when he had to climb the dark

¹ Chimney-sweep : A boy who climbs chimneys and sweeps out the soot.

² North country : The north of England.

flues, rubbing his poor knees and elbows raw; and when the soot got into his eyes, which it did every day in the week; and when his master beat him, which he did every day in the week; and when he had not enough to eat, which happened every day in the week likewise. And he laughed the other half of the day, when he was tossing halfpennies with the other boys, or playing leap-frog over the posts, or bowling stones at the horses' legs as they trotted by, which last was excellent fun, when there was a wall at hand behind which to hide.

3. As for chimney-sweeping, and being hungry, and being beaten, he took all that for the way of the world, like the rain and snow and thunder, and stood manfully with his back to it till it was over, as his old donkey did to a hailstorm; and then shook his ears and was as jolly as ever; and thought of the fine times coming, when he would be a man, and a master sweep, and sit in the public-house with a quart of beer and a long pipe, and play cards for silver money, and wear velvetens and ankle-jacks, and keep a white bull-dog with one gray ear, and carry her puppies in his pocket, just like a man.

4. And he would have apprentices, one, two, three, if he could. How he would bully them, and

knock them about, just as his master did to him; and make them carry home the soot sacks, while he rode before them on his donkey, with a pipe in his mouth and a flower in his button-hole, like a king at the head of his army. Yes, there were good times coming; and, when his master let him have a pull at the leavings of his beer, Tom was the jolliest boy in the whole town.

5. One day a smart little groom rode into the court where Tom lived. Tom was just hiding behind a wall, to heave half a brick at his horse's legs, as is the custom of that country when they welcome strangers; but the groom saw him, and halloed to him to know where Mr. Grimes, the chimney-sweep, lived. Now, Mr. Grimes was Tom's own master, and Tom was a good man of business, and always civil to customers, so he put the half-brick down quietly behind the wall, and proceeded to take orders. Mr. Grimes was to come up next morning to Sir John Harthover's, at the Place, for his old chimney-sweep was gone to prison, and the chimneys wanted sweeping.

6. So Tom and his master set out; Grimes rode the donkey in front, and Tom and the brushes walked behind; out of the court and up the street, past the closed window shutters, and the winking, weary policeman, and the roofs all shining in the

gray dawn. They passed through the pitmen's³ village, all shut up and silent now, and through the turnpike; and then they were out in the real country, and plodding along the black dusty road, between black slag walls, with no sound but the groaning and thumping of the pit-engine in the next field. But soon the road grew white, and the walls likewise; and at the wall's foot grew long grass and gay flowers, all drenched with dew; and instead of the groaning of the pit-engine, they heard the skylark saying his matins⁴ high up in the air, and the pit-bird warbling in the sedges, as he had warbled all night long.

7. All else was silent. For old Mrs. Earth was still fast asleep; and, like many pretty people, she looked still prettier asleep than awake. The great elm trees in the gold-green meadows were fast asleep above, and the cows fast asleep beneath them; nay, the few clouds which were about were fast asleep likewise, and so tired that they had lain down on the earth to rest, in long white flakes and bars, among the stems of the elm trees, and along the tops of the alders by the stream, waiting for the sun to bid them rise and go about their day's business in the clear blue overhead.

³ Pitmen : Miners.

⁴ Matins : Morning prayers or songs.

8. On they went; and Tom looked, and looked, for he had never been so far in the country before; and longed to get over a gate, and pick buttercups, and look for birds' nests in the hedge; but Mr. Grimes was a man of business, and would not have heard of that.

9. Soon they came up with a poor Irishwoman, trudging along with a bundle at her back. She had a gray shawl over her head, and a crimson madder⁵ petticoat; so you may be sure she came from Galway.⁶ She had neither shoes nor stockings, and limped along as if she were tired and foot-sore; but she was a very tall handsome woman, with bright gray eyes, and heavy black hair hanging about her cheeks. And she took Mr. Grimes' fancy so much, that when he came alongside he called out to her:

10. "This is a hard road for a gradely⁷ foot like that. Will ye up, lass, and ride behind me?"

But, perhaps, she did not admire Mr. Grimes' look and voice; for she answered quietly:

"No, thank you: I'd sooner walk with your little lad here."

"You may please yourself," growled Grimes, and went on smoking.

⁵ Madder; Red.

⁶ Galway: A maritime county of Ireland,

⁷ Gradely: Neat, nice,

11. So she walked beside Tom, and talked to him, and asked him where he lived, and what he knew, and all about himself, till Tom thought he had never met such a pleasant-spoken woman. And she asked him, at last, whether he said his prayers! and seemed sad when he told her that he knew no prayers to say.

Then he asked her where she lived, and she said far away by the sea. And Tom asked her about the sea; and she told him how it rolled and roared over the rocks in winter nights, and lay still in the bright summer days, for the children to bathe and play in it; and many a story more, till Tom longed to go and see the sea, and bathe in it likewise.

12. At last, at the bottom of a hill, they came to a spring. And there Grimes stopped, and looked; and Tom looked too. Tom was wondering whether anything lived in that dark cave, and came out at night to fly in the meadows. But Grimes was not wondering at all. Without a word, he got off his donkey, and clambered over the low road wall, and knelt down, and began dipping his ugly head into the spring—and very dirty he made it.

13. Tom was picking the flowers as fast as he could. The Irishwoman helped him, and showed him how to tie them up; and a very pretty nose-

gay they made between them. But when he saw Grimes actually wash, he stopped, quite astonished; and when Grimes had finished, and began shaking his ears to dry them, he said:

“Why, master, I never saw you do that before.”

“Nor will again, most likely. ’Twasn’t for cleanliness I did it, but for coolness. I’d be ashamed to want washing every week or so, like any smutty collier lad.”⁸

14. “I wish I might go and dip my head in,” said poor little Tom. “It must be as good as putting it under the town pump; and there is no beadle⁹ here to drive a chap away.”

“Thou come along,” said Grimes; “what dost want with washing thyself? Thou did not drink half a gallon of beer last night, like me.”

“I don’t care for you,” said naughty Tom, and ran down to the stream, and began washing his face.

15. Grimes was very sulky, because the woman preferred Tom’s company to his; so he dashed at him with horrid words, and tore him up from his knees, and began beating him. But Tom was accustomed to that, and got his head safe between Mr. Grimes’ legs, and kicked his shins with all his might.

⁸ Collier lad : One who digs coal or makes charcoal.

⁹ Beadle: A parish officer who keeps order.

"Are you not ashamed of yourself, Thomas Grimes?" cried the Irishwoman over the wall.

16. Grimes looked up, startled at her knowing his name; but all he answered was, "No, nor never was yet;" and went on beating Tom.

"True for you. If you ever had been ashamed of yourself, you would have gone over into Vendale long ago."

"What do you know about Vendale?" shouted Grimes; but he left off beating Tom.

17. "I know about Vendale, and about you, too. I know, for instance, what happened in Aldermire Copse, by night, two years ago come Martinmas."¹⁰

"You do?" shouted Grimes; and leaving Tom, he climbed up over the wall, and faced the woman. Tom thought he was going to strike her; but she looked him too full and fierce in the face for that.

"Yes; I was there," said the Irishwoman quietly.

"You are no Irishwoman, by your speech," said Grimes, after many bad words.

"Never mind who I am. I saw what I saw; and if you strike that boy again, I can tell what I know."

¹⁰ Martinmas (St. Martin and mass): The feast of St. Martin, the 11th of November.

18. Grimes seemed quite cowed, and got on his donkey without another word.

“Stop!” said the Irishwoman. “I have one more word for you both; for you will both see me again before all is over. Those that wish to be clean, clean they will be; and those that wish to be foul, foul they will be. Remember.”

And she turned away, and through a gate into the meadow. Grimes stood still a moment, like a man who had been stunned. Then he rushed after her, shouting, “You come back.” But when he got into the meadow, the woman was not there.

19. Had she hidden away? There was no place to hide in. But Grimes looked about, and Tom also, for he was as puzzled as Grimes himself at her disappearing so suddenly; but look where they would, she was not there.

Grimes came back again, as silent as a post, for he was a little frightened; and, getting on his donkey, filled a fresh pipe, and smoked away, leaving Tom in peace.

And now they had gone three miles and more, and came to Sir John’s lodge-gates.

20. Tom and his master did not go in through the great iron gates, as if they had been Dukes or Bishops, but round the back way, and a very long way round it was; and into a little back-door, where

the ash-boy let them in, yawning horribly; and then in a passage the housekeeper met them, in such a flowered chintz dressing-gown, that Tom mistook her for my lady herself, and she gave Grimes solemn orders about “You will take care of this, and take care of that,” as if he was going up the chimneys, and not Tom.

21. And Grimes listened, and said every now and then, under his voice, “You’ll mind that, you little beggar?” and Tom did mind, all at least that he could. And then the housekeeper turned them into a grand room, all covered up in sheets of brown paper, and bade them begin, in a lofty and tremendous voice; and so after a whimper or two, and a kick from his master, into the grate Tom went, and up the chimney, while a housemaid stayed in the room to watch the furniture; to whom Mr. Grimes paid many playful and chivalrous compliments, but met with very slight encouragement in return.

22. How many chimneys Tom swept I cannot say; but he swept so many that he got quite tired, and puzzled too, for they were not like the town flues to which he was accustomed, but such as you would find—if you would only get up them and look, which perhaps you would not like to do—in old country-houses, large and crooked chimneys,

which had been altered again and again, till they ran one into another. So Tom fairly lost his way in them; not that he cared much for that, though he was in pitchy darkness, for he was as much at home in a chimney as a mole is underground; but at last, coming down as he thought the right chimney, he came down the wrong one, and found himself standing on the hearthrug in a room the like of which he had never seen before.

23. Tom had never seen the like. He had never been in gentlefolks' rooms but when the carpets were all up, and the curtains down, and the furniture huddled together under a cloth, and the pictures covered with aprons and dusters; and he had often enough wondered what the rooms were like when they were all ready for the quality to sit in. And now he saw, and he thought the sight very pretty.

24. The room was all dressed in white,—white window-curtains, white bed-curtains, white furniture, and white walls, with just a few lines of pink here and there. The carpet was all over gay little flowers; and the walls were hung with pictures in gilt frames, which amused Tom very much. There were pictures of ladies and gentlemen, and pictures of horses and dogs. The horses he liked; but the dogs he did not care for much, for there were no

bull-dogs among them, not even a terrier. But the two pictures which took his fancy most were, one a man in long garments, with little children and their mothers round him, who was laying his hand upon the children's heads. That was a very pretty picture, Tom thought, to hang in a lady's room. For he could see that it was a lady's room by the dresses which lay about.

25. The other picture was that of a man nailed to a cross, which surprised Tom much. He fancied that he had seen something like it in a shop-window. But why was it there? "Poor man," thought Tom, "and he looks so kind and quiet. But why should the lady have such a sad picture as that in her room? Perhaps it was some kinsman of hers, who had been murdered by the savages in foreign parts, and she kept it there for a remembrance." And Tom felt sad, and awed, and turned to look at something else.

26. The next thing he saw, and that too puzzled him, was a washing-stand, with ewers and basins, and soap and brushes, and towels, and a large bath full of clean water—what a heap of things all for washing! "She must be a very dirty lady," thought Tom, "by my master's rule, to want as much scrubbing as all that. But she must be very cunning to put the dirt out of the way so well after-

wards, for I don't see a speck about the room, not even on the very towels."

27. And then, looking toward the bed, he saw that dirty lady, and held his breath with astonishment.

Under the snow-white coverlet, upon the snow-white pillow, lay the most beautiful little girl that Tom had ever seen. Her cheeks were almost as white as the pillow, and her hair was like threads of gold spread all about over the bed. She might have been as old as Tom, or maybe a year or two older; but Tom did not think of that. He thought only of her delicate skin and golden hair, and wondered whether she was a real live person, or one of the wax dolls he had seen in the shops. But when he saw her breathe, he made up his mind that she was alive, and stood staring at her, as if she had been an angel out of heaven.

28. No. She cannot be dirty. She never could have been dirty, thought Tom to himself. And then he thought, "And are all people like that when they are washed?" And he looked at his own wrist, and tried to rub the soot off, and wondered whether it ever would come off. "Certainly I should look much prettier then, if I grew at all like her."

29. And looking round, he suddenly saw, stand-

ing close to him, a little ugly, black, ragged figure, with bleared eyes and grinning white teeth. He turned on it angrily. What did such a little black ape want in that sweet young lady's room? And behold it was himself, reflected in a great mirror the like of which Tom had never seen before.

30. And Tom, for the first time in his life, found out that he was dirty; and burst into tears with shame and anger; and turned to sneak up the chimney again and hide; and upset the fender and threw the fire-irons down, with a noise as of ten thousand tin kettles tied to ten thousand mad dogs' tails.

31. Up jumped the little white lady in her bed, and, seeing Tom, screamed as shrill as any peacock. In rushed a stout old nurse from the next room, and seeing Tom likewise, made up her mind that he had come to rob, plunder, destroy, and burn; and dashed at him, as he lay over the fender, so fast that she caught him by the jacket.

32. But she did not hold him. Tom had been in a policeman's hands many a time, and out of them too, what is more; and he would have been ashamed to face his friends forever if he had been stupid enough to be caught by an old woman; so he doubled under the good lady's arm, across the room, and out of the window in a moment.

33. All under the window spread a tree, with great leaves and sweet white flowers, almost as big as his head. It was a magnolia, I suppose; but Tom knew nothing about that, and cared less; for down the tree he went, like a cat, and across the garden lawn, and over the iron railings, and up the park towards the wood, leaving the old nurse to scream murder and fire at the window.

34. Never was there heard at Hall Place—not even when the fox was killed in the conservatory, among acres of broken glass, and tons of smashed flower-pots—such a noise, row, and total contempt of dignity, repose, and order, as that day, when Grimes, the gardener, the groom, the dairymaid, Sir John, the steward, the plowman, the keeper, and the Irishwoman, all ran up the park, shouting “Stop thief,” in the belief that Tom had at least a thousand pounds’ worth of jewels in his empty pockets; and the very magpies and jays followed Tom up, screaming and screaming, as if he were a hunted fox, beginning to droop his brush.

35. Tom, of course, made for the woods. He had never been in a wood in his life; but he was sharp enough to know that he might hide in a bush, or swarm up a tree, and, altogether, had more chance there than in the open. If he had not

known that, he would have been foolisher than a mouse or a minnow.

36. But when he got into the wood, he found it a very different sort of place from what he had fancied. He pushed into a thick cover of rhododendrons, and found himself at once caught in a trap. The boughs laid hold of his legs and arms, poked him in his face and his stomach, made him shut his eyes tight (though that was no great loss, for he could not see at best a yard before his nose); and when he got through the rhododendrons, the hassock-grass¹¹ and sedges tumbled him over, and cut his poor little fingers afterwards most spitefully; the birches birched him as soundly as if he had been a nobleman at Eton,¹² and over the face too (which is not fair swishing, as all brave boys will agree); and the lawyers¹³ tripped him up, and tore his shins as if they had sharks' teeth—which lawyers are likely enough to have.

37. "I must get out of this," thought Tom, "or I shall stay here till somebody comes to help me—which is just what I don't want."

But how to get out was the difficult matter. And indeed I don't think he would ever have got

¹¹ Hassock-grass : Coarse grass growing in large tufts.

¹² Eton : A famous English boys' school.

¹³ Lawyers : Thorny brambles ; in the next line but one it means men of legal profession.

out at all, but have stayed there till the cock-robins covered him with leaves, if he had not suddenly run his head against a wall.

38. Now running your head against a wall is not pleasant, especially if it is a loose wall, with the stones all set on edge, and a sharp-cornered one hits you between the eyes and makes you see all manner of beautiful stars. The stars are very beautiful, certainly; but unfortunately they go in the twenty-thousandth part of a split second, and the pain which comes after them does not. And so Tom hurt his head; but he was a brave boy, and did not mind that a penny. He guessed that over the wall the cover would end; and up it he went, and over like a squirrel.

39. And there he was, out on the great grouse-moors, which the country folk called Harthover Fell ¹⁴—heather and bog and rock, stretching away and up, up to the very sky.

Now, Tom was a cunning little fellow—as cunning as an old Exmoor ¹⁵ stag. Why not? Though he was but ten years old, he had lived longer than most stags, and had more wits to start with into the bargain.

40. He knew as well as a stag that if he backed

¹⁴ Fell : A rocky hill.

¹⁵ Exmoor : A forest in Somerset and Devon in which a few red deer are still found.

he might throw the hounds out. So the first thing he did when he was over the wall was to make the neatest double sharp to his right, and run along under the wall for nearly half a mile.

41. Whereby Sir John, and the keeper, and the steward, and the gardener, and the plowman, and the dairymaid, and all the hue-and-cry ¹⁶ together, went on ahead half a mile in the very opposite direction, and inside the wall, leaving him a mile off on the outside; while Tom heard their shouts die away in the woods and chuckled to himself merrily.

At last he came to a dip in the land, and went to the bottom of it, and then he turned bravely away from the wall and up the moor; for he knew that he had put a hill between him and his enemies, and could go on without their seeing him.

42. So he went on and on, till his head spun round with the heat, and he thought he heard church-bells ringing, a long way off.

“Ah!” he thought, “where there is a church there will be houses and people; and, perhaps, someone will give me a bit and a sup.” So he set off again, to look for the church; for he was sure that he heard the bells quite plain.

43. And in a minute more, when he looked

¹⁶ Hue-and-cry : Loud outcry raised in pursuing a criminal.

round, he stopped again, and said, "Why, what a big place the world is!"

And so it was; for, from the top of the mountain he could see—what could he not see?

44. Behind him, far below, was Harthover, and the dark woods, and the shining salmon river; and on his left, far below, was the town, and the smoking chimneys of the collieries;¹⁷ and far, far away, the river widened to the shining sea; and little white specks, which were ships, lay on its bosom. Before him lay, spread out like a map, great plains, and farms, and villages, amid dark knots of trees. They all seemed at his very feet; but he had sense to see that they were long miles away.

45. And to his right rose moor after moor, hill after hill, till they faded away, blue into blue sky. But between him and those moors, and really at his very feet, lay something, to which, as soon as Tom saw it, he determined to go, for that was the place for him.

A deep, deep green and rocky valley, very narrow, and filled with wood; but through the wood, hundreds of feet below him, he could see a clear stream glance. Oh, if he could but get down to that stream! Then, by the stream, he saw the roof of a little cottage, and a little garden

¹⁷ Collieries : Coal mines,

set out in squares and beds. And there was a tiny little red thing moving in the garden, no bigger than a fly. As Tom looked down, he saw that it was a woman in a red petticoat.

46. Ah! perhaps she would give him something to eat. And there were the church-bells ringing again. Surely there must be a village down there. Well, nobody would know him or what had happened at the Place. The news could not have got there yet, even if Sir John had set all the policemen in the county after him; and he could get down there in five minutes.

47. Tom was right about the hue-and-cry not having got thither; for he had come, without knowing it, the best part of ten miles from Harthover; but he was wrong about getting down in five minutes, for the cottage was more than a mile off, and a good thousand feet below.

48. However, down he went, like a brave little man as he was, though he was very footsore, and tired, and hungry, and thirsty; while the church-bells rang so loud, he began to think that they must be inside his own head, and the river chimed and tinkled far below; and this was the song which it sang:

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreaming pool;

Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming weir ;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church-bell rings,
 Undefined, for the undefined ;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl ;
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank ;
Darker and darker the farther I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow ;
 Who dare sport with the sin-defiled ?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child.

Strong and free, strong and free,
The floodgates are open, away to the sea,
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along,
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar.
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
 Undefined, for the undefined ;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

So Tom went down; and all the while he never
saw the Irishwoman going down behind him.

CHAPTER II

1. A MILE off, and a thousand feet down.

So Tom found it; though it seemed as if he
could have chucked a pebble on to the back of the
woman in the red petticoat who was weeding in

the garden, or even across the dale to the rocks beyond. For the bottom of the valley was just one field broad, and on the other side ran the stream; and above it, gray crag, gray down, gray stair, gray moor walled up to heaven.

2. Down Tom went, by stock and stone, sedge and ledge, bush and rush, as if he had been born a jolly little black ape, with four hands instead of two.

And all the while he never saw the Irishwoman coming down behind him.

3. At last he got to the bottom. But, behold, it was not the bottom—as people usually find when they are coming down a mountain. For at the foot of the crag were heaps and heaps of fallen limestone of every size from that of your head to that of a stage-wagon, with holes between them full of sweet heath-fern; and before Tom got through them, he was out in the bright sunshine again; and then he felt, once for all and suddenly, as people generally do, that he was b-e-a-t, beat.

4. He could not get on. The sun was burning, and yet he felt chill all over. He was quite empty, and yet he felt quite sick. There was but two hundred yards of smooth pasture between him and the cottage, and yet he could not walk down it. He could hear the stream murmuring only one field

beyond it, and yet it seemed to him as if it was a hundred miles off.

5. He lay down on the grass till the beetles ran over him, and the flies settled on his nose. I don't know when he would have got up again, if the gnats and the midges had not taken compassion on him. But the gnats blew their trumpets so loud in his ear, and the midges nibbled so at his hands and face wherever they could find a place free from soot, that at last he woke up, and stumbled away, down over a low wall, and into a narrow road, and up to the cottage-door.

6. And a neat, pretty cottage it was, with clipped yew hedges all round the garden, and yews inside too, cut into peacocks and trumpets and teapots and all kinds of queer shapes. And out of the open door came a noise like that of the frogs on the Great-A, when they know that it is going to be scorching hot to-morrow—and how they know that I don't know, and you don't know, and nobody knows.

He came slowly up to the open door, which was all hung round with clematis and roses; and then peeped in, half afraid.

7. And there sat by the empty fireplace, which was filled with a pot of sweet herbs, the nicest old woman that ever was seen, in her red petticoat, and

short dimity bedgown, and clean white cap, with a black silk handkerchief over it, tied under her chin. At her feet sat the grandfather of all the cats; and opposite her sat, on two benches, twelve or fourteen neat, rosy, chubby little children, learning Chris-cross-row;¹⁸ and gabble enough they made about it.

8. Such a pleasant cottage it was, with a shiny clean stone floor, and curious old prints on the walls, and an old black oak sideboard full of bright pewter and brass dishes, and a cuckoo clock in the corner, which began shouting as soon as Tom appeared; not that it was frightened at Tom, but that it was just eleven o'clock.

9. All the children started at Tom's dirty black figure,—the girls began to cry, and the boys began to laugh, and all pointed at him rudely enough; but Tom was too tired to care for that.

“What art thou, and what dost want?” cried the old dame. “A chimney-sweep! Away with thee! I'll have no sweeps here.”

10. “Water,” said poor little Tom, quite faint.

“Water? There's plenty i' the beck,”¹⁹ she said, quite sharply.

¹⁸ Chris-cross-row (Christ-cross-row): The alphabet, so called from a way of writing it in the form of a cross as a charm.

¹⁹ Beck: A small brook.

“But I can’t get there; I’m most clemmed ²⁰ with hunger and drought.” And Tom sank down upon the door-step, and laid his head against the post.

And the old dame looked at him through her spectacles one minute, and two, and three; and then she said, “He’s sick; and a bairn’s ²¹ a bairn, sweep or none.”

11. “Water,” said Tom.

“God forgive me!” and she put by her spectacles, and rose, and came to Tom. “Water’s bad for thee; I’ll give thee milk.” And she toddled off into the next room, and brought a cup of milk and a bit of bread.

Tom drank the milk off at one draught, and then looked up, revived.

“Where didst come from?” said the dame.

12. “Over Fell, there,” said Tom, and pointed up into the sky.

“Over Harthover? and down Lewthwaite Crag? Art sure thou art not lying?”

“Why should I?” said Tom, and leaned his head against the post.

“And how got ye up there?”

“I came over from the Place;” and Tom was

²⁰ Clemmed: Starved.

²¹ Bairn: Child.

so tired and desperate he had no heart or time to think of a story, so he told all the truth in a few words.

13. "Bless thy little heart! And thou hast not been stealing, then?"

"No."

"Bless thy little heart! and I'll warrant not. Why, God's guided the bairn, because he was innocent! Away from the Place, and over Harthover Fell, and down Lewthwaite Crag! Who ever heard the like, if God hadn't led him? Why dost not eat thy bread?"

"I can't."

14. "It's good enough, for I made it myself."

"I can't," said Tom, and he laid his head on his knees, and then asked:

"Is it Sunday?"

"No, then; why should it be?"

"Because I hear the church-bells ringing so."

15. "Bless thy pretty heart! The bairn's sick. Come wi' me, and I'll hap²² thee up somewhere. If thou wert a bit cleaner I'd put thee in my own bed, for the Lord's sake. But come along here."

But when Tom tried to get up, he was so tired and giddy that she had to help him and lead him.

16. She put him in an outhouse upon soft sweet

²² Hap: Wrap.

hay and an old rug, and bade him sleep off his walk, and she would come to him when school was over, in an hour's time.

And so she went in again, expecting Tom to fall fast asleep at once.

But Tom did not fall asleep.

17. Instead of it he turned and tossed and kicked about in the strangest way, and felt so hot all over that he longed to get into the river and cool himself; and then he fell half asleep, and dreamt that he heard the little white lady crying to him, "Oh, you're so dirty; go and be washed;" and then he heard the Irishwoman saying, "Those that wish to be clean, clean they will be."

18. And then he heard the church-bells ring so loud, close to him too, that he was sure it must be Sunday, in spite of what the old dame had said; and he would go to church, and see what a church was like inside, for he had never been in one, poor little fellow, in all his life. But the people would never let him come in, all over soot and dirt like that. He must go to the river and wash first. And he said out loud again and again, though being half asleep he did not know it, "I must be clean, I must be clean."

19. And all of a sudden he found himself, not

in the outhouse on the hay, but in the middle of a meadow, over the road, with the stream just before him, saying continually, "I must be clean, I must be clean." He had got there on his own legs, between sleep and awake, as children will often get out of bed, and go about the room, when they are not quite well. But he was not a bit surprised, and went on to the bank of the brook, and lay down on the grass, and looked into the clear, clear limestone water, with every pebble at the bottom bright and clean, while the little silver trout dashed about in fright at the sight of his black face; and he dipped his hand in and found it so cool, cool, cool; and he said, "I will be a fish; I will swim in the water; I must be clean, I must be clean."

20. So he pulled off all his clothes in such haste that he tore some of them, which was easy enough with such ragged old things. And he put his poor hot sore feet into the water; and then his legs; and the farther he went in, the more the church bells rang in his head.

21. "Ah," said Tom, "I must be quick and wash myself; the bells are ringing quite loud now; and they will soon stop, and then the door will be shut, and I shall never be able to get in at all."

And all the while he never saw the Irishwoman, not behind him this time, but before.

22. For just before he came to the river side, she had stepped down into the cool clear water; and her shawl and her petticoat floated off her, and the green water-weeds floated round her sides, and the white water-lilies floated round her head, and the fairies of the stream came up from the bottom and bore her away and down upon their arms; for she was the Queen of them all; and perhaps of more besides.

“Where have you been?” they asked her.

23. “I have been smoothing sick folks’ pillows, and whispering sweet dreams into their ears; opening cottage casements, to let out the stifling air; coaxing little children away from gutters, and foul pools where fever breeds; turning women from the gin-shop door, and staying men’s hands as they were going to strike their wives; doing all I can to help those who will not help themselves: and little enough that is, and weary work for me. But I have brought you a new little brother, and watched him safe all the way here.”

24. Then all the fairies laughed for joy at the thought that they had a little brother coming.

“But mind, maidens, he must not see you, or know that you are here. He is but a savage now,

and like the beasts which perish; and from the beasts which perish he must learn. So you must not play with him, or speak to him, or let him see you: but only keep him from being harmed."

25. Then the fairies were sad, because they could not play with their new brother, but they always did what they were told.

And their Queen floated away down the river; and whither she went, thither she came. But all this Tom, of course, never saw or heard: and perhaps if he had it would have made little difference in the story; for he was so hot and thirsty, and longed so to be clean for once, that he tumbled himself as quick as he could into the clear cool stream.

26. And he had not been in it two minutes before he fell fast asleep, into the quietest, sunniest, cosiest sleep that ever he had in his life; and he dreamt about the green meadows by which he had walked that morning, and the tall elm-trees, and the sleeping cows; and after that he dreamt of nothing at all.

The reason of his falling into such a delightful sleep is very simple; and yet hardly anyone has found it out. It was merely that the fairies took him.

27. The kind old dame came back at twelve,

when school was over, to look at Tom, but there was no Tom there. She looked about for his footprints; but the ground was so hard that there was no slot, as they say in dear old North Devon.²³

So the old dame went in again quite sulky, thinking that little Tom had tricked her with a false story, and shammed ill, and then run away again.

But she altered her mind the next day. For, when Sir John and the rest of them had run themselves out of breath, and lost Tom, they went back again, looking very foolish.

28. And they looked more foolish still when Sir John heard more of the story from the nurse; and more foolish still, again, when they heard the whole story from Miss Ellie, the little lady in white. All she had seen was a poor little black chimney-sweep, crying and sobbing, and going to get up the chimney again. Of course, she was very much frightened: and no wonder. But that was all. The boy had taken nothing in the room; by the mark of his little sooty feet, they could see that he had never been off the hearthrug till the nurse caught hold of him. It was all a mistake.

29. And Tom?

Ah! now comes the most wonderful part of this wonderful story. Tom, when he woke, for of

²³ Devon: A county of England.

course he woke—children always wake after they have slept exactly as long as is good for them—found himself swimming about in the stream, being about four inches long, and having round his neck a set of external gills just like those of a sucking eft,²⁴ which he mistook for a lace frill, till he pulled at them, found he hurt himself, and made up his mind that they were part of himself, and best left alone.

In fact, the fairies had turned him into a water-baby.

30. But at all events, so it happened to Tom. And, therefore, the keeper, and the groom, and Sir John made a great mistake, and were very unhappy (Sir John at least) without any reason, when they found a black thing in the water, and said it was Tom's body, and that he had been drowned. They were utterly mistaken. Tom was quite alive; and cleaner, and merrier, than he ever had been.

31. The fairies had washed him, you see, in the swift river, so thoroughly that not only his dirt, but his whole husk and shell had been washed quite off him, and the pretty little real Tom was washed out of the inside of it, and swam away, as a

²⁴ Eft : A newt ; a small water animal.

caddis²⁵ does when its case of stones and silk is bored through, and away it goes on its back, paddling to the shore, there to split its skin, and fly away as a caperer,²⁶ on four fawn-colored wings, with long legs and horns. They are foolish fellows, the caperers, and fly into the candle at night, if you leave the door open. We will hope Tom will be wiser, now he has got safe out of his sooty old shell.

32. But good Sir John did not understand all this, and he took it into his head that Tom was drowned. When they looked into the empty pockets of his shell, and found no jewels there, nor money—nothing but three marbles, and a brass button with a string to it—then Sir John did something as like crying as ever he did in his life, and blamed himself more bitterly than he need have done.

33. So he cried, and the groom-boy cried, and the huntsman cried, and the dame cried, and the little girl cried, and the dairymaid cried, and the old nurse cried (for it was somewhat her fault), and my lady cried, for though people have wigs, that is no reason why they should not have hearts; but the keeper did not cry, though he had been so

²⁵ Caddis : A case-worm ; the larva of a little fly called the caddis-fly.

²⁶ Caperer : The caddis-fly.

good-natured to Tom the morning before; for he was so dried up with running after poachers that you could no more get tears out of him than milk out of leather: and Grimes did not cry, for Sir John gave him ten pounds, and he drank it all in a week.

34. Sir John sent, far and wide, to find Tom's father and mother: but he might have looked till Doomsday for them, for one was dead, and the other was in Botany Bay.²⁷ And the little girl would not play with her dolls for a whole week, and never forgot poor little Tom. And soon my lady put a pretty little tombstone over Tom's shell in the little churchyard in Vendale, where the old dalesmen all sleep side by side between the limestone crags.

35. And the dame decked it with garlands every Sunday, till she grew so old that she could not stir abroad; then the little children decked it for her. And always she sang an old song, as she sat spinning what she called her wedding-dress. The children could not understand it, but they liked it none the less for that; for it was very sweet, and very sad; and that was enough for them. And these are the words of it:

²⁷ Botany Bay : An English convict settlement in Australia.

“ When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green ;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen ;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away ;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

“ When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown ;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down ;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among :
God grant you find one face there,
You loved when all was young.”

36. Those are the words: but they are only the body of it: the soul of the song was the dear old woman's sweet face, and sweet voice, and the sweet old air to which she sang; and that, alas! one cannot put on paper. And at last she grew so stiff and lame that the angels were forced to carry her; and they helped her on with her wedding-dress, and carried her up over Harthover Fells, and a long way beyond that, too; and there was a new schoolmistress in Vendale.

37. And all the while Tom was swimming about in the river, with a pretty little lace-collar of gills about his neck, as lively as a grig, and as clean as a fresh-run salmon.

Now if you don't like my story, then go to the schoolroom and learn your multiplication-table, and see if you like that better. Some people, no doubt, would do so. So much the better for us, if not for them. It takes all sorts, they say, to make a world.

CHAPTER III

1. Tom was now quite amphibious,²⁸ and what is better still, he was clean. For the first time in his life, he felt how comfortable it was to have nothing on him but himself. But he only enjoyed it: he did not know it, or think about it; just as you enjoy life and health, and yet never think about being alive and healthy; and may it be long before you have to think about it!

2. He did not remember having ever been dirty. Indeed, he did not remember any of his old troubles, being tired, or hungry, or beaten, or sent up dark chimneys. Since that sweet sleep, he had forgotten all about his master, and Harthover Place, and the little white girl, and in a word, all that had happened to him when he lived before; and what was best of all, he had forgotten all the

²⁸ **Amphibious** ; Able to live both on land and in water.

bad words which he had learned from Grimes and the rude boys with whom he used to play.

3. But Tom was very happy in the water. He had been sadly overworked in the land-world; and so now, to make up for that, he had nothing but holidays in the water-world for a long, long time to come. He had nothing to do now but enjoy himself, and look at all the pretty things which are to be seen in the cool clear water-world, where the sun is never too hot, and the frost is never too cold.

And what did he live on? Water-cresses, perhaps; or perhaps water-gruel, and water-milk.

4. Now you must know that all the things under the water talk; only not such a language as ours; but such as horses, and dogs, and cows, and birds talk to each other; and Tom soon learned to understand them and talk to them; so that he might have had very pleasant company if he had only been a good boy. But I am sorry to say, he was too like some other little boys, very fond of hunting and tormenting creatures for mere sport.

5. Some people say that boys cannot help it; that it is nature, and only a proof that we are all originally descended from beasts of prey. But whether it is nature or not, little boys can help it, and must help it. For if they have naughty, low, mischievous tricks in their nature, as monkeys

have, that is no reason why they should give way to those tricks like monkeys, who know no better. And therefore they must not torment dumb creatures; for if they do, a certain old lady who is coming will surely give them exactly what they deserve.

6. But Tom did not know that; and he pecked and howked the poor water-things about sadly, till they were all afraid of him, and got out of his way, or crept into their shells; so he had no one to speak to or play with.

The water-fairies, of course, were very sorry to see him so unhappy, and longed to take him, and tell him how naughty he was, and teach him to be good, and to play and romp with him too: but they had been forbidden to do that. Tom had to learn his lesson for himself by sound and sharp experience, as many another foolish person has to do, though there may be many a kind heart yearning over them all the while, and longing to teach them what they can only teach themselves.

7. On the evening of a very hot day, he saw a sight.

He had been very stupid all day, and so had the trout; for they would not move an inch to take a fly, though there were thousands on the water, but lay dozing at the bottom under the shade of the

stones; and Tom lay dozing too, and was glad to cuddle their smooth cool sides, for the water was quite warm and unpleasant.

8. But toward evening it grew suddenly dark, and Tom looked up and saw a blanket of black clouds lying right across the valley above his head, resting on the crags right and left. He felt not quite frightened, but very still; for everything was still. There was not a whisper of wind, nor a chirp of a bird to be heard; and next a few great drops of rain fell plop²⁹ into the water, and one hit Tom on the nose, and made him pop his head down quickly enough.

9. And then the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed, and leaped across Vendale and back again, from cloud to cloud, and cliff to cliff, till the very rocks in the stream seemed to shake: and Tom looked up at it through the water, and thought it the finest thing he ever saw in his life.

10. But out of the water he dared not put his head; for the rain came down by bucketsful, and the hail hammered like shot on the stream, and churned it into foam; and soon the stream rose, and rushed down, higher and higher, and fouler and fouler, full of beetles, and sticks; and straws, and worms, and addle-eggs, and wood-lice, and

²⁹ Plop : Suddenly, heavily.

leeches, and odds and ends, and omnium-gatherums, and this, that, and the other, enough to fill nine museums.

11. Tom could hardly stand against the stream, and hid behind a rock. But the trout did not; for out they rushed from among the stones, and began gobbling the beetles and leeches in the most greedy and quarrelsome way, and swimming about with great worms hanging out of their mouths, tugging and kicking to get them away from each other.

12. And now, by the flashes of the lightning, Tom saw a new sight—all the bottom of the stream alive with great eels, turning and twisting along, all down stream and away. They had been hiding for weeks past in the cracks of the rocks, and in burrows in the mud; and Tom had hardly ever seen them, except now and then at night: but now they were all out, and went hurrying past him so fiercely and wildly that he was quite frightened. And as they hurried past he could hear them say to each other, “We must run, we must run. What a jolly thunderstorm! Down to the sea, down to the sea!”

13. And then the otter came by with all her brood, twining and sweeping along as fast as the eels themselves; and she spied Tom as she came by, and said:

“Now is your time, eft, if you want to see the world. Come along, children, never mind those nasty eels: we shall breakfast on salmon to-morrow. Down to the sea, down to the sea!”

14. Then came a flash brighter than all the rest, and by the light of it—in the thousandth part of a second they were gone again—but he had seen them, he was certain of it—three beautiful little white girls, with their arms twined round each other’s necks, floating down the torrent, as they sang, “Down to the sea, down to the sea!”

“Oh stay! Wait for me!” cried Tom; but they were gone: yet he could hear their voices clear and sweet through the roar of thunder and water and wind, singing as they died away, “Down to the sea!”

15. “Down to the sea?” said Tom; “everything is going to the sea, and I will go too. Good-by, trout.” But the trout were so busy gobbling worms that they never turned to answer him; so that Tom was spared the pain of bidding them farewell.

16. And now, down the rushing stream, guided by the bright flashes of the storm; past tall birch-fringed rocks, which shone out one moment as clear as day, and the next were dark as night; past dark hovers under swirling banks, from which

great trout rushed out on Tom, thinking him to be good to eat, and turned back sulkily, for the fairies sent them home again with a tremendous scolding, for daring to meddle with a water-baby; on through narrow strids³⁰ and roaring cataracts, where Tom was deafened and blinded for a moment by the rushing waters; along deep reaches, where the white water-lilies tossed and flapped beneath the wind and hail; past sleeping villages; under dark bridge-arches, and away and away to the sea. And Tom could not stop, and did not care to stop; he would see the great world below, and the salmon, and the breakers, and the wide wide sea.

17. And when the daylight came, Tom found himself out in the salmon river.

And after a while he came to a place where the river spread out into broad still shallow reaches, so wide that little Tom, as he put his head out of the water, could hardly see across.

18. And there he stopped. He got a little frightened. "This must be the sea," he thought. "What a wide place it is! If I go on into it I shall surely lose my way, or some strange thing will bite me. I will stop here and look out for the

³⁰ Strid: A narrow passage between steep banks which looks as if it might be crossed at a *stride*.

otter, or the eels, or someone to tell me where I shall go."

19. So he went back a little way, and crept into a crack of the rock, just where the river opened out into the wide shallows, and watched for someone to tell him his way: but the otter and the eels were gone on miles and miles down the stream.

20. There he waited, and slept too, for he was quite tired with his night's journey; and, when he woke, the stream was clearing to a beautiful amber hue, though it was still very high. And after a while he saw a sight which made him jump up; for he knew in a moment it was one of the things which he had come to look for.

21. Such a fish! ten times as big as the biggest trout, and a hundred times as big as Tom, sculling up the stream past him, as easily as Tom had sculled down.

22. Such a fish! shining silver from head to tail, and here and there a crimson dot; with a grand hooked nose and grand curling lip, and a grand bright eye, looking round him as proudly as a king, and surveying the water right and left as if all belonged to him. Surely he must be the salmon, the king of all the fish.

23. Tom was so frightened that he longed to creep into a hole; but he need not have been; for

salmon are all true gentlemen, and, like true gentlemen, they look noble and proud enough, and yet, like true gentlemen, they never harm or quarrel with anyone, but go about their own business, and leave rude fellows to themselves.

24. The salmon looked at him full in the face, and then went on without minding him, with a swish or two of his tail which made the stream boil again. And in a few minutes came another, and then four or five, and so on; and all passed Tom, rushing and plunging up the cataract with strong strokes of their silver tails, now and then leaping clean out of water and up over a rock, shining gloriously for a moment in the bright sun; while Tom was so delighted that he could have watched them all day long.

25. And at last one came up bigger than all the rest; but he came slowly, and stopped, and looked back, and seemed very anxious and busy. And Tom saw that he was helping another salmon, an especially handsome one, who had not a single spot upon it, but was clothed in pure silver from nose to tail.

26. "My dear," said the great fish to his companion, "you really look dreadfully tired, and you must not over-exert yourself at first. Do rest yourself behind this rock;" and he shoved her

gently with his nose, to the rock where Tom sat.

27. You must know that this was the salmon's wife. For salmon, like other true gentlemen, always choose their lady, and love her, and are true to her, and take care of her and work for her, and fight for her, as every true gentleman ought; and are not like vulgar chub and roach and pike, who have no high feelings, and take no care of their wives.

Then he saw Tom, and looked at him very fiercely one moment, as if he was going to bite him.

"What do you want here?" he said, very fiercely.

"Oh, don't hurt me!" cried Tom. "I only want to look at you; you are so handsome."

28. "Ah?" said the salmon, very stately but very civilly. "I really beg your pardon; I see what you are, my little dear. I have met one or two creatures like you before, and found them very agreeable and well-behaved. Indeed, one of them showed me a great kindness lately, which I hope to be able to repay. I hope we shall not be in your way here. As soon as this lady is rested, we shall proceed on our journey."

29. What a well-bred old salmon he was!

“So you have seen things like me before?” asked Tom.

“Several times, my dear. Indeed, it was only last night that one at the river’s mouth came and warned me and my wife of some new stake-nets which had got into the stream, I cannot tell how, since last winter, and showed us the way round them, in the most charmingly obliging way.”

30. “So there are babies in the sea?” cried Tom, and clapped his little hands. “Then I shall have someone to play with there! How delightful!”

“Were there no babies up this stream?” asked the lady salmon.

“No! and I grew so lonely. I thought I saw three last night; but they were gone in an instant, down to the sea. So I went too; for I had nothing to play with but caddises and dragon-flies and trout.”

“Ugh!” cried the lady, “what low company!”

“My dear, if he has been in low company, he has certainly not learnt their low manners,” said the salmon.

31. “No, indeed, poor little dear: but how sad for him to live among such people as caddises, who have actually six legs, the nasty things; and dragon-flies, too! why they are not even good to

eat; for I tried them once, and they are all hard and empty; and, as for trout, everyone knows what they are." Whereon she curled up her lip, and looked dreadfully scornful, while her husband curled up his too, till he looked as proud as Alcibiades.³¹

32. "Why do you dislike the trout so?" asked Tom.

"My dear, we do not even mention them, if we can help it; for I am sorry to say they are relations of ours who do us no credit. A great many years ago they were just like us: but they were so lazy, and cowardly, and greedy, that instead of going down to the sea every year to see the world and grow strong and fat, they chose to stay and poke about in the little streams and eat worms and grubs; and they are very properly punished for it; for they have grown ugly and brown and spotted and small; and are actually so degraded in their tastes that they will eat our children."

33. "And then they pretend to scrape acquaintance with us again," said the lady. "Why, I have actually known one of them propose to a lady salmon, the impudent little creature."

"I should hope," said the gentleman, "that there are very few ladies of our race who would de-

³¹ Alcibiades (450-404 B. C.) A famous Greek general.

grade themselves by listening to such a creature for an instant. If I saw such a thing happen, I should consider it my duty to put them both to death upon the spot." So the old salmon said, like an old blue-blooded hidalgo³² of Spain; and what is more, he would have done it, too. For you must know, no enemies are so bitter against each other as those who are of the same race; and a salmon looks on a trout, as some great folks look on some little folks, as something just too much like himself to be tolerated.

CHAPTER IV

1. So the salmon went up, after Tom had warned them of the wicked old otter; and Tom went down, but slowly and cautiously, coasting along the shore. He was many days about it, for it was many miles down to the sea; and perhaps he would never have found his way, if the fairies had not guided him, without his seeing their fair faces, or feeling their gentle hands.

2. And, as he went, he had a very strange adventure. It was a clear still September night, and the moon shone so brightly down through the water, that he could not sleep, though he shut his eyes as

³² Hidalgo : A Spanish gentleman of noble birth.

tight as possible. So at last he came up to the top, and sat upon a little point of rock, and looked up at the broad yellow moon, and wondered what she was, and thought that she looked at him. And he watched the moonlight on the rippling river, and the black heads of the firs, and the silver-frosted lawns, and listened to the owl's hoot, and the snipe's bleat, and the fox's bark, and the otter's laugh; and smelt the soft perfume of the birches, and the wafts of heather honey off the grouse moor far above; and felt very happy, though he could not well tell why. You, of course, would have been very cold sitting there on a September night, without the least bit of clothes on your wet back; but Tom was a water-baby, and therefore felt cold no more than a fish.

3. Suddenly, he saw a beautiful sight. A bright red light moved along the river-side, and threw down into the water a long tap-root of flame. Tom, curious little rogue that he was, must needs go and see what it was; so he swam to the shore, and met the light as it stopped over a shallow run at the edge of a low rock.

4. And there, underneath the light, lay five or six great salmon, looking up at the flame with their great goggle eyes, and wagging their tails, as if they were very much pleased at it.

Tom came to the top, to look at this wonderful light nearer, and made a splash.

And he heard a voice say:

“There was a fish rose.”

5. He did not know what the words meant: but he seemed to know the sound of them, and to know the voice which spoke them; and he saw on the bank three great two-legged creatures, one of whom held the light, flaring and sputtering, and another a long pole. And he knew that they were men, and was frightened, and crept into a hole in the rock, from which he could see what went on.

6. The man with the torch bent down over the water, and looked earnestly in; and then he said:

“Tak’ that muckle ³³ fellow, lad; he’s ower fifteen puns ³⁴; and haud ³⁵ your hand steady.”

Tom felt that there was some danger coming, and longed to warn the foolish salmon, who kept staring up at the light as if he was bewitched. But before he could make up his mind, down came the pole through the water; there was a fearful splash and struggle, and Tom saw that the poor salmon was speared right through, and was lifted out of the water.

7. And then, from behind, there sprang on

³³ Muckle : Large.

³⁴ Punds : Pounds.

³⁵ Haud : Hold.

these three men three other men; and there were shouts, and blows, and words which Tom recollected to have heard before; and he shuddered and turned sick at them now, for he felt somehow that they were strange, and ugly, and wrong, and horrible. And it all began to come back to him. They were men; and they were fighting; savage, desperate, up-and-down fighting, such as Tom had seen too many times before.

8. And he stopped his little ears, and longed to swim away; and was very glad that he was a water-baby, and had nothing to do any more with horrid dirty men, with foul clothes on their backs, and foul words on their lips; but he dared not stir out of his hole: while the rock shook over his head with the trampling and struggling of the keepers³⁶ and the poachers.³⁷

9. All of a sudden there was a tremendous splash, and a frightful flash, and a hissing, and all was still.

For into the water, close to Tom, fell one of the men; he who held the light in his hand. Into the swift river he sank, and rolled over and over in the current. Tom heard the men above run along, seemingly looking for him; but he drifted down

³⁶ Keepers: Men who have care of game.

³⁷ Poachers; Those who kill game or fish, etc., contrary to law.

into the deep hole below, and there lay quite still, and they could not find him.

10. Tom waited a long time, till all was quiet; and then he peeped out, and saw the man lying. At last he screwed up his courage and swam down to him. "Perhaps," he thought, "the water has made him fall asleep, as it did me."

Then he went nearer. He grew more and more curious, he could not tell why. He must go and look at him. He would go very quietly, of course; so he swam round and round him, closer and closer; and, as he did not stir, at last he came quite close and looked him in the face.

11. The moon shone so bright that Tom could see every feature; and, as he saw, he recollected, bit by bit, it was his old master, Grimes.

Tom turned tail, and swam away as fast as he could.

"Oh, dear me!" he thought, "now he will turn into a water-baby. What a nasty troublesome one he will be! And perhaps he will find me out, and beat me again."

12. So he went up the river again a little way, and lay there the rest of the night under an alder root; but, when morning came, he longed to go down again to the big pool, and see whether Mr. Grimes had turned into a water-baby yet.

So he went very carefully, peeping round all the rocks, and hiding under all the roots. Mr. Grimes lay there still; he had not turned into a water-baby. In the afternoon Tom went back again. He could not rest till he had found out what had become of Mr. Grimes. But this time Mr. Grimes was gone; and Tom made up his mind that he was turned into a water-baby.

13. He might have made himself easy, poor little man; Mr. Grimes did not turn into a water-baby, or anything like one at all. But he did not make himself easy; and a long time he was fearful lest he should meet Grimes suddenly in some deep pool. He could not know that the fairies had carried him away, and put him, where they put everything which falls into the water, exactly where it ought to be.

Then Tom went on down, for he was afraid of staying near Grimes: and as he went, all the vale looked sad.

14. But Tom was always a brave, determined, little English bulldog, who never knew when he was beaten; and on and on he held, till he saw a long way off the red buoy through the fog. And then he found, to his surprise, the stream turned round and running up inland.

15. It was the tide, of course; but Tom knew

nothing of the tide. He only knew that in a minute more the water, which had been fresh, turned salt all round him. And then there came a change over him. He felt as strong, and light, and fresh, as if his veins had run champagne; and gave, he did not know why, three skips out of the water, a yard high, and head over heels, just as the salmon do when they first touch the noble rich salt water, which, as some wise men tell us, is the mother of all living things.

16. He did not care now for the tide being against him. The red buoy was in sight, dancing in the open sea; and to the buoy he would go, and to it he went. He passed great shoals of bass and mullet,³⁸ leaping and rushing in after the shrimps, but he never heeded them, or they him; and once he passed a great black shining seal, who was coming in after the mullet. The seal put his head and shoulders out of water, and stared at him, looking exactly like a fat old negro with a gray pate. And Tom, instead of being frightened, said, "How d'ye do, sir; what a beautiful place the sea is!" And the old seal, instead of trying to bite him, looked at him with his soft sleepy winking eyes, and said, "Good tide to you, my little man; are

³⁸ Bass, Mullet, Turbot; Kinds of fish.

you looking for your brothers and sisters? I passed them all at play outside."

17. "Oh, then," said Tom, "I shall have play-fellows at last," and he swam on to the buoy, and got upon it (for he was quite out of breath) and sat there, and looked round for water-babies: but there were none to be seen.

18. The sea-breeze came in freshly with the tide and blew the fog away; and the little waves danced for joy around the buoy, and the old buoy danced with them. The shadows of the clouds ran races over the bright blue bay, and yet never caught each other up; and the breakers ³⁹ plunged merrily upon the wide white sands, and jumped up over the rocks, to see what the green fields inside were like, and tumbled down and broke themselves all to pieces, and never minded it a bit, but mended themselves and jumped up again. And the terns ⁴⁰ hovered over Tom like huge white dragon-flies with black heads, and the gulls laughed like girls at play, and the sea-pies, with their red bills and legs, flew to and fro from shore to shore, and whistled sweet and wild. And Tom looked and looked, and listened; and he would have been very happy, if he could only have seen

³⁹ Breakers : Waves breaking in foam against the shore.

⁴⁰ Terns, Gulls, Sea-pies : Sea-birds.

the water-babies. Then, when the tide turned, he left the buoy, and swam round and round in search of them: but in vain.

19. Sometimes he thought he heard them laughing: but it was only the laughter of the ripples. And sometimes he thought he saw them at the bottom: but it was only white and pink shells. And once he was sure he had found one, for he saw two bright eyes peeping out of the sand. So he dived down, and began scraping the sand away, and cried, "Don't hide; I do want someone to play with so much!" And out jumped a great turbot with his ugly eyes and mouth all awry, and flopped away along the bottom, knocking poor Tom over. And he sat down at the bottom of the sea, and cried salt tears from sheer disappointment.

20. To have come all this way, and faced so many dangers, and yet to find no water-babies! How hard! Well, it did seem hard: but people, even little babies, cannot have all they want without waiting for it, and working for it too, my little man, as you will find out some day.

21. And Tom sat upon the buoy long days, long weeks, looking out to sea, and wondering when the water-babies would come back; and yet they never came.

Then he began to ask all the strange things

which came in out of the sea if they had seen any; and some said "Yes," and some said nothing at all.

22. But one day among the rocks he found a playfellow. It was not a water-baby, alas! but it was a lobster; and a very distinguished lobster he was; for he had live barnacles⁴¹ on his claws, which is a great mark of distinction in lobsterdom, and no more to be bought for money than a good conscience or the Victoria Cross.⁴²

23. Tom had never seen a lobster before; and he was mightily taken with this one; for he thought him the most curious, odd, ridiculous creature he had ever seen; and there he was not far wrong; for all the ingenious men, and all the scientific men, and all the fanciful men, in the world, with all the old German boggy-painters into the bargain, could never invent, if all their wits were boiled into one, anything so curious, and so ridiculous, as a lobster.

24. He had one claw knobbed and the other jagged; and Tom delighted in watching him hold on to the seaweed with his knobbed claw, while he cut up salads with his jagged one, and then put them into his mouth, after smelling at them, like a

⁴¹ Barnacles : Sea animals which adhere to rocks, ships, etc.

⁴² Victoria Cross : A bronze cross awarded for valor to British sailors or soldiers.

monkey. And always the little barnacles threw out their casting-nets and swept the water, and came in for their share of whatever there was for dinner.

25. But Tom was most astonished to see how he fired himself off—snap! like the leap-frogs which you make out of a goose's breast-bone. Certainly he took the most wonderful shots, and backwards, too. For, if he wanted to go into a narrow crack ten yards off, what do you think he did? If he had gone in head foremost, of course he could not have turned round. So he used to turn his tail to it, and lay his long horns, which carry his sixth sense in their tips (and nobody knows what that sixth sense is), straight down his back to guide him, and twist his eyes back till they almost came out of their sockets, and then made ready, present, fire, snap!—and away he went, pop into the hole; and peeped out and twiddled his whiskers, as much as to say, "You couldn't do that."

26. Tom asked him about water-babies. "Yes," he said. He had seen them often. But he did not think much of them. They were meddlesome little creatures, that went about helping fish and shells which got into scrapes. Well, for his part, he should be ashamed to be helped by little soft creatures that had not even a shell on their backs.

He had lived quite long enough in the world to take care of himself.

27. He was a conceited fellow, the old lobster, and not very civil to Tom; and you will hear how he had to alter his mind before he was done, as conceited people generally have. But he was so funny, and Tom so lonely, that he could not quarrel with him; and they used to sit in holes in the rocks, and chat for hours.

And about this time there happened to Tom a very strange and important adventure—so important, indeed, that he was very near never finding the water-babies at all; and I am sure you would have been sorry for that.

28. It befell that, on the very shore, and over the very rocks, where Tom was sitting with his friend the lobster, there walked one day the little white lady, Ellie herself, and with her a very wise man indeed—Professor Ptthmlnsprts.⁴³

Ellie and he were walking on the rocks, and he was showing her about one in ten thousand of all the beautiful and curious things which are to be seen there. But little Ellie was not satisfied with them at all. She liked much better to play with live children, or even with dolls, which she could pretend were alive; and at last she said honestly,

⁴³ Ptthmlnsprts : Put-them-all-in-spirits.

"I don't care about all these things, because they can't play with me, or talk to me. If there were little children now in the water, as there used to be, and I could see them, I should like that."

29. "Children in the water, you strange little duck?" said the professor.

"Yes," said Ellie. "I know there used to be children in the water, and mermaids too, and mermen.⁴⁴ I saw them all in a picture at home, of a beautiful lady sailing in a car drawn by dolphins, and babies flying round her, and one sitting in her lap; and the mermaids swimming and playing, and the mermen trumpeting on conch-shells; and it is called 'The Triumph of Galatea;' ⁴⁵ and there is a burning mountain in the picture behind. It hangs on the great staircase, and I have looked at it ever since I was a baby, and dreamt about it a hundred times; and it is so beautiful that it must be true."

30. Little Ellie was, I suppose, a stupid little girl; for, instead of being convinced by Professor Ptthmlnsprts' arguments, she only asked the same question over again.

"But why are there not water-babies?"

⁴⁴ Mermaids, Mermen : Fabulous sea creatures having the upper part of their bodies like men and women and the lower like fish.

⁴⁵ The Triumph of Galatea : A famous picture by the Italian artist Raphael. Galatea : A sea nymph loved by one of the Cyclops.

I trust and hope that it was because the professor trod at that moment on the edge of a very sharp mussel, and hurt one of his corns sadly, that he answered quite sharply:

“Because there aint.”

Which was not even good English, my dear little boy.

31. And he groped with his net under the weeds so violently that, as it befell,⁴⁶ he caught poor little Tom.

He felt the net very heavy; and lifted it out quickly, with Tom all entangled in the meshes.

“Dear me!” he cried. “What a large pink Holothurian; ⁴⁷ with hands, too! It must be connected with Synapta.”

And he took him out.

“It has actually eyes!” he cried. “Why, it must be a Cephalopod! This is a most extraordinary!”

“No, I aint!” cried Tom, as loud as he could; for he did not like to be called bad names.

“It is a water-baby!” cried Ellie; and of course it was.

“Water-fiddlesticks, my dear!” said the pro-

⁴⁶ Befell: Happened.

⁴⁷ Holothurian, Synapta, Cephalopod: The scientific names of small sea animals.

fessor; and poked Tom with his finger, for want of anything better to do; and said carelessly, "My dear little maid, you must have dreamt of water-babies last night, your head is so full of them."

32. Now Tom had been in the most horrible and unspeakable fright all the while; and had kept as quiet as he could, though he was called a Holothurian and a Cephalopod; for it was fixed in his little head that if a man with clothes on caught him, he might put clothes on him too, and make a dirty black chimney-sweep of him again. But, when the professor poked him, it was more than he could bear; and, between fright and rage, he turned to bay as valiantly as a mouse in a corner, and bit the professor's finger till it bled.

33. "Oh! ah! yah!" cried he; and glad of an excuse to be rid of Tom, dropped him on to the seaweed, and thence he dived into the water and was gone in a moment.

"But it was a water-baby, and I heard it speak!" cried Ellie. "Ah, it is gone!" And she jumped down off the rock to try and catch Tom before he slipped into the sea.

Too late! and what was worse, as she sprang down, she slipped, and fell some six feet with her head on a sharp rock, and lay quite still.

34. The professor picked her up, and tried to

waken her, and called to her, and cried over her, for he loved her very much: but she would not waken at all. So he took her up in his arms and carried her to her governess, and they all went home; and little Ellie was put to bed, and lay there quite still; only now and then she woke up and called out about the water-baby: but no one knew what she meant, and the professor did not tell, for he was ashamed to tell.

35. And, after a week, one moonlight night, the fairies came flying in at the window and brought her such a pretty pair of wings that she could not help putting them on; and she flew with them out of the window, and over the land, and over the sea, and up through the clouds, and nobody heard or saw anything of her for a very long while.

CHAPTER V

1. BUT what became of little Tom?

He slipped away off the rocks into the water, as I said before. But he could not help thinking of little Ellie. He did not remember who she was; but he knew that she was a little girl, though she was a hundred times as big as he. That is not surprising: size has nothing to do with kindred. A

tiny weed may be first cousin to a great tree; and a little dog like Vick knows that Lioness is a dog too, though she is twenty times larger than herself. So Tom knew that Ellie was a little girl, and thought about her all that day, and longed to have had her to play with; but he had very soon to think of something else.

2. He was going along the rocks in three-fathom water, watching the pollock ⁴⁸ catch prawns,⁴⁹ and the wrasses nibble barnacles off the rocks, shells and all, when he saw a round cage of green withes; and inside it, looking very much ashamed of himself, sat his friend the lobster, twiddling his horns, instead of thumbs.

“What, have you been naughty, and have they put you in the lock-up?” asked Tom.

The lobster felt a little indignant at such a notion, but he was too much depressed in spirits to argue; so he only said, “I can’t get out.”

“Why did you get in?”

3. “After that nasty piece of dead fish.” He had thought it looked and smelt very nice when he was outside, and so it did, for a lobster: but now he turned round and abused it because he was angry with himself.

⁴⁸ Pollocks, Wrasses : Sea-fish.

⁴⁹ Prawns : Shrimp-like animals.

“Where did you get in?”

“Through that round hole at the top.”

“Then why don’t you get out through it?”

“Because I can’t:” and the lobster twiddled his horns more fiercely than ever, but he was forced to confess.

4. “I have jumped upwards, downwards, backwards, and sideways, at least four thousand times; and I can’t get out: I always get up underneath there, and can’t find the hole.”

Tom looked at the trap, and having more wit than the lobster, he saw plainly enough what was the matter; as you may if you will look at a lobster-pot.

“Stop a bit,” said Tom. “Turn your tail up to me, and I’ll pull you through hindforemost, and then you won’t stick in the spikes.”

5. But the lobster was so stupid and clumsy that he couldn’t hit the hole. Like a great many fox-hunters, he was very sharp as long as he was in his own country; but as soon as they get out of it they lose their heads; and so the lobster, so to speak, lost his tail.

Tom reached and clawed down the hole after him, till he caught hold of him; and then, as was to be expected, the clumsy lobster pulled him in head foremost.

“Hullo! here is a pretty business,” said Tom. “Now take your great claws, and break the points off those spikes, and then we shall both get out easily.”

“Dear me, I never thought of that,” said the lobster; “and after all the experience of life that I have had!”

6. You see, experience is of very little good unless a man, or a lobster, has wit enough to make use of it. For a good many people, like old Polonius,⁵⁰ have seen all the world, and yet remain little better than children after all.

But they had not got half the spikes away when they saw a great dark cloud over them: and lo, and behold, it was the otter.

How she did grin and grin when she saw Tom. “Yar!” said she, “you little meddlesome wretch, I have you now! I will serve you out for telling the salmon where I was!” And she crawled all over the pot to get in.

7. Tom was horribly frightened, and still more frightened when she found the hole in the top, and squeezed herself right down through it, all eyes and teeth. But no sooner was her head inside than valiant Mr. Lobster caught her by the nose and held on.

⁵⁰ Polonius : The king's chamberlain in Shakspeare's play, *Hamlet*.

And there they were all three in the pot, rolling over and over, and very tight packing it was. And the lobster tore at the otter, and the otter tore at the lobster, and both squeezed and thumped poor Tom till he had no breath left in his body; and I don't know what would have happened to him if he had not at last got on the otter's back, and safe out of the hole.

8. He was right glad when he got out: but he would not desert his friend who had saved him; and the first time he saw his tail uppermost he caught hold of it, and pulled with all his might.

But the lobster would not let go.

"Come along," said Tom; "don't you see she is dead?" And so she was, quite drowned and dead.

And that was the end of the wicked otter.

But the lobster would not let go.

"Come along, you stupid old stick-in-the-mud," cried Tom, "or the fisherman will catch you!" And that was true, for Tom felt someone above beginning to haul up the pot.

But the lobster would not let go.

9. Tom saw the fisherman haul him up to the boat-side, and thought it was all up with him. But when Mr. Lobster saw the fisherman, he gave such a furious and tremendous snap that he snapped out of his hand, and out of the pot, and

safe into the sea. But he left his knobbed claw behind him; for it never came into his stupid head to let go after all, so he just shook his claw off as the easier method.

10. And now happened to Tom a most wonderful thing; for he had not left the lobster five minutes before he came upon a water-baby.

A real live water-baby, sitting on the white sand, very busy about a little point of rock. And when it saw Tom it looked up for a moment, and then cried, "Why, you are not one of us. You are a new baby! Oh, how delightful!"

And it ran to Tom, and Tom ran to it, and they hugged and kissed each other for ever so long, they did not know why. But they did not want any introductions there under the water.

11. At last Tom said, "Oh, where have you been all this while? I have been looking for you so long, and I have been so lonely."

"We have been here for days and days. There are hundreds of us about the rocks. How was it you did not see us, or hear us when we sing and romp every evening before we go home?"

Tom looked at the baby again, and then he said:

"Well, this is wonderful! I have seen things just like you again and again, but I thought you

were shells, or sea-creatures. I never took you for water-babies like myself."

12. Now, was not that very odd? So odd, indeed, that you will, no doubt, want to know how it happened, and why Tom could never find a water-baby till after he had got the lobster out of the pot. And, if you will read this story nine times over, and then think for yourself, you will find out why.

"Now," said the baby, "come and help me, or I shall not have finished before my brothers and sisters come, and it is time to go home."

"What shall I help you at?"

"At this poor dear little rock; a great clumsy boulder came rolling by in the last storm, and knocked all its head off, and rubbed off all its flowers. And now I must plant it again with seaweeds, and coralline,⁵¹ and anemones,⁵² and I will make it the prettiest little rock-garden on all the shore."

13. So they worked away at the rock, and planted it, and smoothed the sand down round it, and capital fun they had till the tide began to turn. And then Tom heard all the other babies coming, laughing and singing and shouting and romping;

⁵¹ **Coralline** : A many-jointed sea-plant.

⁵² **Anemones** : Small sea-plants.

and the noise they made was just like the noise of the ripple. So he knew that he had been hearing and seeing the water-babies all along; only he did not know them, because his eyes and ears were not opened.

And in they came, dozens and dozens of them, some bigger than Tom and some smaller, all in the neatest little white bathing dresses; and when they found that he was a new baby, they hugged him and kissed him, and then put him in the middle and danced round him on the sand, and there was no one ever so happy as poor little Tom.

14. "Now then," they cried all at once, "we must come away home, we must come away home, or the tide will leave us dry. We have mended all the broken seaweed, and put all the rock-pools in order, and planted all the shells again in the sand, and nobody will see where the ugly storm swept in last week."

And this is the reason why the rock-pools are always so neat and clean, because the water-babies come inshore after every storm to sweep them out, and comb them down, and put them all to rights again.

And where is the home of the water-babies? In St. Brandan's ⁵³ fairy isle.

⁵³ St. Brandan's Isle ; A wonderful flying island said to lie beyond

15. And there were the water-babies in thousands, more than Tom, or you either, could count.

But I wish Tom had given up all his naughty tricks, and left off tormenting dumb animals now that he had plenty of playfellows to amuse him. Instead of that, I am sorry to say, he would meddle with the creatures, all but the water-snakes, for they would stand no nonsense. So he tickled the madrepores,⁵⁴ to make them shut up; and frightened the crabs, to make them hide in the sand and peep out at him with the tips of their eyes; and put stones into the anemones' mouths, to make them fancy that their dinner was coming.

16. The other children warned him, and said, "Take care what you are at. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid is coming." But Tom never heeded them, being quite riotous with high spirits and good luck, till, one Friday morning early, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid came indeed.

A very tremendous lady she was; and when the children saw her they all stood in a row, very upright indeed, and smoothed down their bathing dresses, and put their hands behind them, just as if they were going to be examined by the inspector.

17. And she had on a black bonnet, and a black

the Canaries. St. Brandan was an Irish Bishop of the sixth century, who traveled in search of the Islands of Paradise.

⁵⁴ Madrepores : Corals.

shawl, and no crinoline ⁵⁵ at all; and a pair of large green spectacles, and a great hooked nose, hooked so much that the bridge of it stood quite up above her eyebrows; and under her arm she carried a great birch-rod. Indeed, she was so ugly that Tom was tempted to make faces at her: but did not; for he did not admire the look of the birch-rod under her arm.

And she looked at the children one by one, and seemed very much pleased with them, though she never asked them one question about how they were behaving; and then began giving them all sorts of nice sea-things—sea-cakes, sea-apples, sea-oranges, sea-bullseyes, ⁵⁶ sea-toffee; and to the very best of all she gave sea-ices, made out of sea-cows' cream, which never melt under water.

18. Now little Tom watched all these sweet things given away, till his mouth watered, and his eyes grew as round as an owl's. For he hoped that his turn would come at last; and so it did. For the lady called him up, and held out her fingers with something in them, and popped it into his mouth; and, lo and behold, it was a nasty cold hard pebble.

“You are a very cruel woman,” said he, and began to whimper.

⁵⁵ Crinoline : Stiff cloth extending the dress skirt.

⁵⁶ Bullseyes : Candy balls. Toffee : Taffy.

“And you are a very cruel boy; who puts pebbles into the sea-anemones’ mouths, to take them in, and make them fancy that they had caught a good dinner! As you did to them, so I must do to you.”

19. “Who told you that?” said Tom.

“You did yourself, this very minute.”

Tom had never opened his lips; so he was very much taken aback indeed.

“Yes; everyone tells me exactly what they have done wrong; and that without knowing it themselves. So there is no use trying to hide anything from me. Now go, and be a good boy, and I will put no more pebbles in your mouth, if you put none in other creatures’.”

“I did not know there was any harm in it,” said Tom.

20. “Then you know now. People continually say that to me: but I tell them, if you don’t know that fire burns, that is no reason that it should not burn you; and if you don’t know that dirt breeds fever, that is no reason why the fevers should not kill you. The lobster did not know that there was any harm in getting into the lobster-pot; but it caught him all the same.”

“Dear me,” thought Tom, “she knows everything!” And so she did, indeed.

“ And so, if you do not know that things are wrong, that is no reason why you should not be punished for them; though not as much, not as much, my little man ” (and the lady looked very kindly, after all), “ as if you did know.”

21. “ Well, you are a little hard on a poor lad,” said Tom.

“ Not at all; I am the best friend you ever had in all your life. But I will tell you; I cannot help punishing people when they do wrong. I like it no more than they do; I am often very, very sorry for them, poor things: but I cannot help it. If I tried not to do it, I should do it all the same. For I work by machinery, just like an engine; and am full of wheels and springs inside; and am wound up very carefully, so that I cannot help going.”

“ Was it long ago since they wound you up?” asked Tom. For he thought, the cunning little fellow, “ She will run down some day: or they may forget to wind her up, as old Grimes used to forget to wind up his watch when he came in from the public-house; and then I shall be safe.”

22. “ I was wound up once and for all, so long ago that I forget all about it.”

“ Dear me,” said Tom, “ you must have been made a long time! ”

“ I never was made, my child; and I shall go for

ever and ever; for I am as old as Eternity, and yet as young as Time."

23. And there came over the lady's face a very curious expression—very solemn, and very sad; and yet very, very sweet. And she looked up and away, as if she were gazing through the sea, and through the sky, at something far, far off; and as she did so, there came such a quiet, tender, patient, hopeful smile over her face that Tom thought for the moment that she did not look ugly at all. And no more she did; for she was like a great many people who have not a pretty feature in their faces, and yet are lovely to behold, and draw little children's hearts to them at once; because, though the house is plain enough, yet from the windows a beautiful and good spirit is looking forth.

24. And Tom smiled in her face, she looked so pleasant for the moment. And the strange fairy smiled too, and said:

"Yes. You thought me very ugly just now, did you not?"

Tom hung down his head, and got very red about the ears.

"And I am very ugly. I am the ugliest fairy in the world; and I shall be, till people behave themselves as they ought to do. And then I shall grow as handsome as my sister, who is the

loveliest fairy in the world; and her name is Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby. So she begins where I end, and I begin where she ends; and those who will not listen to her must listen to me, as you will see. And now do you be a good boy, and do as you would be done by, which they did not; and then, when my sister, Madame Doasyouwouldbedoneby, comes on Sunday, perhaps she will take notice of you, and teach you how to behave. She understands that better than I do." And so she went.

25. Tom determined to be a very good boy all Saturday; and he was; for he never frightened one crab, nor tickled any live corals, nor put stones into the sea anemones' mouths, to make them fancy they had got a dinner; and when Sunday morning came, sure enough, Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby came too. Whereat all the little children began dancing and clapping their hands, and Tom danced too with all his might.

26. And as for the pretty lady, I cannot tell you what the color of her hair was, or of her eyes: no more could Tom; for, when anyone looks at her, all they can think of is, that she has the sweetest, kindest, tenderest, funniest, merriest face they ever saw, or want to see. But Tom saw that she was a very tall woman, as tall as her sister; but instead

of being gnarly and horny, and scaly, and prickly, like her, she was the most nice, soft, fat, smooth, pussy, cuddly, delicious creature who ever nursed a baby; and she understood babies thoroughly, for she had plenty of her own, whole rows and regiments of them, and has to this day. And all her delight was, whenever she had a spare moment, to play with babies, in which she showed herself a woman of sense; for babies are the best company, and the pleasantest playfellows, in the world; at least, so all the wise people in the world think.

27. And therefore, when the children saw her, they naturally all caught hold of her, and pulled her, till she sat down on a stone, and climbed into her lap, and clung round her neck, and caught hold of her hands; and then they all put their thumbs into their mouths, and began cuddling and purring like so many kittens, as they ought to have done, while those who could get nowhere else sat down on the sand, and cuddled her feet—for no one, you know, wears shoes in the water, except horrid old bathing-women, who are afraid of the water-babies pinching their horny toes. And Tom stood staring at them; for he could not understand what it was all about.

28. “And who are you, you little darling?” she said.

“Oh, that is the new baby!” they all cried, pulling their thumbs out of their mouths; “and he never had any mother,” and they all put their thumbs back again, for they did not wish to lose any time.

“Then I will be his mother, and he shall have the very best place; so get out, all of you, this moment.”

But she took Tom in her arms, and laid him in the softest place of all, and kissed him, and patted him, and talked to him, tenderly and low, such things as he had never heard before in his life; and Tom looked up into her eyes, and loved her, and loved, till he fell fast asleep from pure love.

29. And when he woke she was telling the children a story. And what story did she tell them? One story she told them, which begins every Christmas Eve, and yet never ends at all for ever and ever; and, as she went on, the children took their thumbs out of their mouths and listened quite seriously; but not sadly at all; for she never told them anything sad; and Tom listened too, and never grew tired of listening. And he listened so long that he fell fast asleep again, and, when he woke, the lady was nursing him still.

30. “Don’t go away,” said little Tom. “This

is so nice. I never had anyone to cuddle me before."

"Don't go away," said all the children; "you have not sung us one song."

"Well, I have time for only one. So what shall it be?"

"The doll you lost! The doll you lost!" cried all the babies at once.

So the strange fairy sang:

"I once had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curled,
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day;
And I cried for her more than a week, dears,
But I never could find where she lay.

"I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day:
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
For her paint is all washed away,
And her arm trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curled:
Yet, for old sakes' sake she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world."

"Now," said the fairy to Tom, "will you be a good boy for my sake, and torment no more sea-beasts till I come back?"

"And you will cuddle me again?" said poor little Tom.

“Of course I will, you little duck. I should like to take you with me and cuddle you all the way, only I must not;” and away she went.

So Tom really tried to be a good boy, and tormented no sea-beasts after that as long as he lived; and he is quite alive, I assure you, still.

Oh, how good little boys ought to be who have kind pussy mammas to cuddle them and tell them stories; and how afraid they ought to be of growing naughty, and bringing tears into their mammas’ pretty eyes!

CHAPTER VI

1. Now you may fancy that Tom was quite good, when he had everything that he could want or wish: but you would be very much mistaken. Being quite comfortable is a very good thing; but it does not make people good. Indeed, it sometimes makes them naughty. And I am very sorry to say that this happened to little Tom. For he grew so fond of the sea-bullseyes and sea-lollipops⁵⁷ that his foolish little head could think of nothing else: and he was always longing for more, and wondering when the strange lady would come again and give him some, and what she would give

⁵⁷ Lollipops : Sweets, especially candy.

him, and how much, and whether she would give him more than the others. And he thought of nothing but lollipops by day, and dreamt of nothing else by night—and what happened then?

2. That he began to watch the lady to see where she kept the sweet things: and began hiding, and sneaking, and following her about, and pretending to be looking the other way, or going after something else, till he found out that she kept them in a beautiful mother-of-pearl cabinet away in a deep crack of the rocks.

3. And he longed to go to the cabinet, and yet he was afraid; and then he longed again, and was less afraid; and at last, by continual thinking about it, he longed so violently that he was not afraid at all. And one night, when all the other children were asleep, and he could not sleep for thinking of lollipops, he crept away among the rocks, and got to the cabinet, and behold! it was open.

4. But, when he saw all the nice things inside, instead of being delighted, he was quite frightened, and wished he had never come there. And then he would only touch them, and he did; and then he would only taste one, and he did; and then he would only eat one, and he did; and then he would only eat two, and then three, and so on; and then

he was terrified lest she should come and catch him, and began gobbling them down so fast that he did not taste them, or have any pleasure in them; and then he felt sick, and would have only one more; and then only one more again; and so on till he had eaten them all up.

And all the while, close behind him, stood Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid.

5. Some people may say, But why did she not keep her cupboard locked? Well, I know. It may seem a very strange thing, but she never does keep her cupboard locked; everyone may go and taste for themselves, and fare accordingly. It is very odd, but so it is; and I am quite sure that she knows best. Perhaps she wishes people to keep their fingers out of the fire, by having them burned.

6. So she just said nothing at all about the matter, not even when Tom came next day with the rest for sweet things. He was horribly afraid of coming; but he was still more afraid of staying away, lest anyone should suspect him. He was dreadfully afraid, too, lest there should be no sweets—as was to be expected, he having eaten them all—and lest then the fairy should inquire who had taken them. But, behold! she pulled out just as many as ever, which astonished Tom, and frightened him still more.

7. And, when the fairy looked him full in the face, he shook from head to foot: however, she gave him his share like the rest, and he thought within himself that she could not have found him out.

But, when he put the sweets into his mouth, he hated the taste of them; and they made him so sick that he had to get away as fast as he could; and terribly sick he was, and very cross and unhappy, all the week after.

8. Then, when the next week came, he had his share again; and again the fairy looked him full in the face; but more sadly than she had ever looked. And he could not bear the sweets: but took them again in spite of himself.

And when Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby came, he wanted to be cuddled like the rest; but she said very seriously:

“I should like to cuddle you; but I cannot, you are so horny and prickly.”

And Tom looked at himself: and he was all over prickles, just like a sea-egg.

9. Which was quite natural; for you must know and believe that people's souls make their bodies just as a snail makes its shell (I am not joking, my little man; I am in serious, solemn earnest). And therefore, when Tom's soul grew all

prickly with naughty tempers, his body could not help growing prickly too, so that nobody would cuddle him, or play with him, or even like to look at him.

What could Tom do now but go away and hide in a corner and cry? For nobody would play with him, and he knew full well why.

10. And he was so miserable all that week that when the ugly fairy came and looked at him once more full in the face, more seriously and sadly than ever, he could stand it no longer, and thrust the sweetmeats away, saying, "No, I don't want any: I can't bear them now," and then burst out crying, poor little man, and told Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid every word as it happened.

He was horribly frightened when he had done so; for he expected her to punish him very severely. But, instead, she only took him up and kissed him.

"I will forgive you, little man," she said. "I always forgive everyone the moment they tell me the truth of their own accord."

11. "Then you will take away all these nasty prickles?"

"That is a very different matter. You put them there yourself, and only you can take them away."

“But how can I do that?” asked Tom, crying afresh.

“Well, I think it is time for you to go to school; so I shall fetch you a schoolmistress, who will teach you how to get rid of your prickles.” And so she went away.

12. Tom was frightened at the notion of a schoolmistress; for he thought she would certainly come with a birch-rod or a cane; but he comforted himself, at last, that she might be something like the old woman in Vendale—which she was not in the least; for, when the fairy brought her, she was the most beautiful little girl that ever was seen, with long curls floating behind her like a golden cloud, and long robes floating all round her like a silver one.

“There he is,” said the fairy; “and you must teach him to be good, whether you like or not.”

“I know,” said the little girl; but she did not seem quite to like, for she put her finger in her mouth, and looked at Tom under her brows; and Tom put his finger in his mouth, and looked at her under his brows, for he was horribly ashamed of himself.

13. The little girl seemed hardly to know how to begin; and perhaps she would never have begun at all if poor Tom had not burst out crying,

and begged her to teach him to be good and help him to cure his prickles; and at that she grew so tender-hearted that she began teaching him as prettily as ever child was taught in the world.

14. And what did the little girl teach Tom? She taught him, first, what you have been taught ever since you said your first prayers at your mother's knees; but she taught him much more simply. For the lessons in that world, my child, have no such hard words in them as the lessons in this, and therefore the water-babies like them better than you like your lessons, and long to learn them more and more; and grown men cannot puzzle nor quarrel over their meaning, as they do here on land.

15. So she taught Tom every day in the week; only on Sundays she always went away home, and the kind fairy took her place. And before she had taught Tom many Sundays, his prickles had vanished quite away, and his skin was smooth and clean again.

"Dear me!" said the little girl; "why, I know you now. You are the very same little chimney-sweep who came into my bedroom."

"Dear me!" cried Tom. "And I know you, too, now. You are the very little white lady whom I saw in bed." And he jumped at her, and

longed to hug and kiss her; but did not, remembering that she was a lady born; so he only jumped round and round her till he was quite tired.

16. And then they began telling each other all their story—how he had got into the water, and she had fallen over the rock; and how he had swum down to the sea, and how she had flown out of the window; and how this, that, and the other, till it was all talked out: and then they both began over again, and I can't say which of the two talked fastest.

And then they set to work at their lessons again, and both liked them so well that they went on well till seven full years were past and gone.

17. You may fancy that Tom was quite content and happy all those seven years; but the truth is, he was not. He had always one thing on his mind, and that was—where little Ellie went, when she went home on Sundays.

To a very beautiful place, she said.

All that good little Ellie could say was, that it was worth all the rest of the world put together. And of course that only made Tom the more anxious to go likewise.

“Miss Ellie,” he said at last, “I will know why I cannot go with you when you go home on Sun-

days, or I shall have no peace, and give you none either."

"You must ask the fairies that."

18. So when the fairy, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, came next, Tom asked her.

"Little boys who are only fit to play with sea-beasts cannot go there," she said. "Those who go there must go first where they do not like, and do what they do not like, and help somebody they do not like. Come here, and see what happens to people who do only what is pleasant."

And she took out of one of her cupboards (she had all sorts of mysterious cupboards in the cracks of the rocks) the most wonderful waterproof book, full of such photographs as never were seen.

19. And on the title-page was written, "The History of the great and famous nation of the Doasyoulikes, who came away from the country of Hardwork, because they wanted to play on the Jews' harp all day long."

In the first picture they saw these Doasyoulikes living in the land of Readymade, at the foot of the Happy-go-lucky Mountains, where flapdoodle grows wild; and if you want to know what that is, you must read Peter Simple.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ **Peter Simple**: A story by Frederick Marryat (1792-1848), an English novelist and naval captain.

20. They lived very much such a life as those jolly old Greeks in Sicily, whom you may see painted on the ancient vases, and really there seemed to be great excuses for them, for they had no need to work.

Instead of houses they lived in the beautiful caves of tufa,⁵⁹ and bathed in the warm springs three times a day; and, as for clothes, it was so warm there that the gentlemen walked about in little beside a cocked hat and a pair of straps, or some light summer tackle of that kind; and the ladies all gathered gossamer in autumn (when they were not too lazy) to make their winter dresses.

21. They were very fond of music, but it was too much trouble to learn the piano or the violin; and as for dancing, that would have been too great an exertion. So they sat on ant-hills all day long, and played on the Jews' harp; and, if the ants bit them, why they just got up and went to the next ant-hill, till they were bitten there likewise.

22. And they sat under the flapdoodle-trees, and let the flapdoodle drop into their mouths; and under the vines, and squeezed the grape-juice down their throats; and, if any little pigs ran about ready roasted, crying, "Come and eat me," as was their fashion in that country, they waited till the

⁵⁹ Tufa : A soft, porous stone.

pigs ran against their mouths, and then took a bite, and were content, just as so many oysters would have been.

They needed no weapons, for no enemies ever came near their land; and no tools, for everything was readymade to their hand; and the stern old fairy Necessity never came near them to hunt them up, and make them use their wits, or die.

23. And so on, and so on, and so on, till there were never such comfortable, easy-going, happy-go-lucky people in the world.

“Well, that is a jolly life,” said Tom.

“You think so?” said the fairy. “Do you see that great peaked mountain there behind,” said the fairy, “with smoke coming out of its top?”

“Yes.”

“And do you see all those ashes, and slag, and cinders lying about?”

“Yes.”

“Then turn over the next five hundred years, and you will see what happens next.”

24. And behold the mountain had blown up like a barrel of gunpowder, and then boiled over like a kettle; whereby one-third of the Doasyoulikes were blown into the air, and another third were smothered in ashes; so that there was only one-third left.

“You see,” said the fairy, “what comes of living on a burning mountain.”

“Oh, why did you not warn them?” said little Ellie.

25. “I did warn them all that I could. I let the smoke come out of the mountain; and wherever there is smoke there is fire. And I laid the ashes and cinders all about; and wherever there are cinders, cinders may be again. But they did not like to face facts, my dears, as very few people do; and so they invented a cock-and-bull story, which, I am sure, I never told them, that the smoke was the breath of a giant, whom some god or other had buried under the mountain; and that the cinders were what the dwarfs roasted the little pigs whole with; and other nonsense of that kind. And, when folks are in that humor, I cannot teach them, save by the good old birch-rod.”

26. And then she turned over the next five hundred years: and there were the remnant of the Doasyoulikes, doing as they liked, as before. They were too lazy to move away from the mountain; so they said, If it has blown up once, that is all the more reason that it should not blow up again. And they were few in number: but they only said, The more the merrier, but the fewer the better fare. However, that was not quite true; for all

the flapdoodle-trees were killed by the volcano, and they had eaten all the roast pigs, who, of course, could not be expected to have little ones. So they had to live very hard, on nuts and roots which they scratched out of the ground with sticks. Some of them talked of sowing corn, as their ancestors used to do, before they came into the land of Ready-made; but they had forgotten how to make plows (they had forgotten even how to make Jews' harps by this time), and had eaten all the seed-corn which they brought out of the land of Hardwork years since; and of course it was too much trouble to go away and find more. So they lived miserably on roots and nuts.

27. "Why," said Tom, "they are growing no better than savages."

"And look how ugly they are all getting," said Ellie.

And she turned over the next five hundred years. And there they were all living up in trees, and making nests to keep off the rain. And underneath the trees lions were prowling about.

"Why," said Ellie, "the lions seem to have eaten a good many of them, for there are very few left now."

"Yes," said the fairy; "you see it was only the

strongest and most active ones who could climb the trees and so escape."

"But what great, hulking, broad-shouldered chaps they are," said Tom; "they are a rough lot as ever I saw."

28. "Yes, they are getting very strong now; for the ladies will not marry any but the very strongest and fiercest gentlemen, who can help them up the trees out of the lions' way."

And she turned over the next five hundred years. And in that they were fewer still, and stronger, and fiercer; but their feet had changed shape very oddly, for they laid hold of the branches with their great toes, as if they had been thumbs, just as a Hindoo tailor uses his toes to thread his needle.

The children were very much surprised, and asked the fairy whether that was her doing.

29. "Yes, and no," she said, smiling. "It was only those who could use their feet as well as their hands who could get a good living: or, indeed, get married; so that they got the best of everything, and starved out all the rest; and those who are left keep up a regular breed of toe-thumb-men, as a breed of short-horns, or skye-terriers, or fancy pigeons is kept up."

“But there is a hairy one among them,” said Ellie.

“Ah!” said the fairy, “that will be a great man in his time, and chief of all the tribe.”

30. And, when she turned over the next five hundred years, it was true.

For this hairy chief had had hairy children, and they had hairier children still; and everyone wished to marry hairy husbands, and have hairy children too; for the climate was growing so damp that none but the hairy ones could live: all the rest coughed and sneezed, and had sore throats, and went into consumptions, before they could grow up to be men and women.

Then the fairy turned over the next five hundred years. And they were fewer still.

“Why, there is one on the ground picking up roots,” said Ellie, “and he cannot walk upright.”

31. No more he could; for, in the same way that the shape of their feet had altered, the shape of their backs had altered also.

“Why,” cried Tom, “I declare they are all apes.”

“Something fearfully like it, poor foolish creatures,” said the fairy. “They are grown so stupid now, that they can hardly think; for none of them have used their wits for many hundred years.

They have almost forgotten, too, how to talk. For each stupid child forgot some of the words it heard from its stupid parents, and had not wits enough to make fresh words for itself. Beside, they are grown so fierce and suspicious and brutal that they keep out of each other's way, and mope and sulk in the dark forests, never hearing each other's voice, till they have forgotten almost what speech is like. I am afraid they will all be apes very soon, and all by doing only what they liked."

32. And in the next five hundred years they were all dead and gone, by bad food and wild beasts and hunters; all except one tremendous old fellow with jaws like a jack, who stood full seven feet high; and M. Du Chaillu⁶⁰ came up to him, and shot him, as he stood roaring and thumping his breast. And he remembered that his ancestors had once been men, and tried to say, "Am I not a man and a brother?" but had forgotten how to use his tongue; and then he had tried to call for a doctor, but he had forgotten the word for one. So all he said was "Ubboboo!" and died.

33. And that was the end of the great and jolly nation of the Doasyoulikes. And when Tom and Ellie came to the end of the book, they looked very sad and solemn.

⁶⁰ M. du Chaillu ; (1835—) An African explorer.

“But could you not have saved them from becoming apes?” said little Ellie, at last.

“At first, my dear; if only they would have behaved like men, and set to work to do what they did not like. But the longer they waited, and behaved like the dumb beasts, who only do what they like, the stupider and clumsier they grew; till at last they were past all cure, for they had thrown their own wits away. It is such things as this that help to make me so ugly that I know not when I shall grow fair.”

“And where are they all now?” asked Ellie.

“Exactly where they ought to be, my dear.”

34. “Yes!” said the fairy, solemnly, half to herself, as she closed the wonderful book. “Folks say now that I can make beasts into men, by circumstance, and selection, and competition, and so forth. Well, perhaps they are right; and perhaps, again, they are wrong. That is one of the seven things which I am forbidden to tell. Whatever their ancestors were, men they are; and I advise them to behave as such, and act accordingly. But let them recollect this, that there are two sides to every question, and a downhill as well as an uphill road; and, if I can turn beasts into men, I can, by the same laws of circumstance, and selection, and competition, turn men into beasts. You were very

near being turned into a beast once or twice, little Tom. Indeed, if you had not made up your mind to go on this journey, and see the world, like an Englishman, I am not sure but that you would have ended as an eel in a pond.

“Oh, dear me!” said Tom; “sooner than that, and be all over slime, I’ll go this minute, if it is to the world’s end.”

CHAPTER VII

1. “Now,” said Tom, “I am ready to be off, if it’s to the world’s end.”

“Ah!” said the fairy, “that is a brave, good boy. But you must go farther than the world’s end, if you want to find Mr. Grimes; for he is at the Other-end-of-Nowhere. You must go to Shiny Wall, and through the white gate that never was opened; and then you will come to Peacepool, and Mother Carey’s Haven, where the good whales go when they die. And there Mother Carey will tell you the way to the Other-end-of-Nowhere, and there you will find Mr. Grimes.”

2. “Oh, dear!” said Tom. “But I do not know my way to Shiny Wall, or where it is at all.”

“Little boys must take the trouble to find out

things for themselves, or they will never grow to be men; so that you must ask all the beasts in the sea and the birds in the air, and if you have been good to them, some of them will tell you the way to Shiny Wall."

"Well," said Tom, "it will be a long journey, so I had better start at once. Good-by, Miss Ellie; you know I am getting a big boy, and I must go out and see the world."

"I know you must," said Ellie; "but you will not forget me, Tom. I shall wait here till you come."

3. And she shook hands with him, and bade him good-by. Tom longed very much again to kiss her; but he thought it would not be respectful, considering she was a lady born; so he promised not to forget her: but his little whirl-about of a head was so full of the notion of going out to see the world that it forgot her in five minutes: however, though his head forgot her, I am glad to say his heart did not.

So he asked all the beasts in the sea, and all the birds in the air, but none of them knew the way to Shiny Wall. For why? He was still too far down south.

4. And he swam northward again, day after day, till at last he met the King of the Herrings,

with a curry-comb growing out of his nose, and a sprat in his mouth for a cigar, and asked him the way to Shiny Wall; so he bolted his sprat head foremost, and said:

“If I were you, young gentleman, I should go to the Allalonestone, and ask the last of the Gair-fowl.⁶¹ She is of a very ancient clan, very nearly as ancient as my own; and knows a good deal which these modern upstarts don’t, as ladies of old houses are likely to do.”

Tom asked his way to her, and the King of the Herrings told him very kindly, for he was a courteous old gentleman of the old school, though he was horribly ugly, and strangely bedizened⁶² too, like the old dandies who lounge in the club-house windows.

But just as Tom had thanked him and set off, he called after him: “Hi! I say, can you fly?”

“I never tried,” says Tom. “Why?”

5. “Because, if you can, I should advise you to say nothing to the old lady about it. There; take a hint. Good-by.”

And away Tom went for seven days and seven nights due northwest, till he came to a great cod-bank, the like of which he never saw before. The

⁶¹ Gair-fowl : The great auk: a diving bird of northern seas, recently extinct.

⁶² Bedizened : Dressed in tawdy finery.

great cod lay below in tens of thousands, and gobbled shell-fish all day long; and the blue sharks roved above in hundreds, and gobbled them when they came up. So they ate, and ate, and ate each other, as they had done since the making of the world; for no man had come here yet to catch them, and find out how rich old Mother Carey is.

6. And there he saw the last of the Gairfowl, standing up on the Allalonestone, all alone. And a very grand old lady she was, full three feet high, and bolt upright, like some old Highland chieftainess. She had on a black velvet gown, and a white pinner and apron, and a very high bridge to her nose (which is a sure mark of high breeding), and a large pair of white spectacles on it, which made her look rather odd: but it was the ancient fashion of her house.

7. Instead of wings, she had two little feathery arms, with which she fanned herself, and complained of the dreadful heat; and she kept on crooning an old song to herself, which she learnt when she was a little baby-bird, long ago:

“ Two little birds they sat on a stone,
One swam away, and then there was one,
With a fal-lal-la-lady.

“ The other swam after, and then there was none,
And so the poor stone was left all alone;
With a fal-lal-la-lady.”

It was “flew” away, properly, and not “swam” away: but, as she could not fly, she had a right to alter it. However, it was a very fit song for her to sing, because she was a lady herself.

Tom came up to her very humbly, and made his bow; and the first thing she said was:

“Have you wings? Can you fly?”

“Oh, dear, no, ma’am; I should not think of such a thing,” said cunning little Tom.

8. “Then I shall have great pleasure in talking to you, my dear. It is quite refreshing nowadays to see anything without wings. They must all have wings, forsooth, now, every new upstart sort of bird, and fly. What can they want with flying, and raising themselves above their proper station in life? In the days of my ancestors no birds ever thought of having wings, and did very well without; and now they all laugh at me because I keep to the good old fashion. Why, the very marrocks⁶³ and dovebies have got wings, the vulgar creatures, and poor little ones enough they are; and my own cousins too, the razor-bills, who are gentlefolk born, and ought to know better than to ape their inferiors.”

9. And so she was running on, while Tom tried to get in a word edgeways; and at last he did, when

⁶³ Marrocks, Dovebies, Auks : diving birds of northern seas.

the old lady got out of breath, and began fanning herself again; and then he asked if she knew the way to Shiny Wall.

“Shiny Wall? Who should know better than I? We all came from Shiny Wall, thousands of years ago, when it was decently cold, and the climate was fit for gentlefolk; but now, what with the heat, and what with these vulgar winged things who fly up and down and eat everything, so that gentlepeople’s hunting is all spoilt, and one really cannot get one’s living, or hardly venture off the rock for fear of being flown against by some creature that would not have dared to come within a mile of one a thousand years ago—what was I saying?

10. “Why, we have quite gone down in the world, my dear, and have nothing left but our honor. And I am the last of my family. A friend of mine and I came and settled on this rock when we were young, to be out of the way of low people. Once we were a great nation, and spread over all the Northern Isles. But men shot us so, and knocked us on the head, and took our eggs—why, if you will believe it, they say that on the coast of Labrador the sailors used to lay a plank from the rock on board the thing called their ship, and drive us along the plank by hundreds, till we

tumbled down into the ship's waist in heaps; and then, I suppose, they ate us, the nasty fellows! Well—but—what was I saying?

11. "At last, there were none of us left, except on the old Gairfowlskerry, just off the Iceland coast, up which no man could climb. Even there we had no peace; for one day, when I was quite a young girl, the land rocked, and the sea boiled, and the sky grew dark, and all the air was filled with smoke and dust, and down tumbled the old Gairfowlskerry into the sea. The dovekies and mar-rocks, of course, all flew away; but we were too proud to do that. Some of us were dashed to pieces, and some drowned; and those who were left got away to Eldey, and the dovekies tell me they are all dead now, and that another Gairfowl-skerry has risen out of the sea close to the old one, but that it is such a poor flat place that it is not safe to live on: and so here I am left alone."

12. This was the Gairfowl's story, and, strange as it may seem, it is every word of it true.

"If you only had had wings!" said Tom; "then you might all have flown away too."

"Yes, young gentleman: and if people are not gentlemen and ladies, and forget that *noblesse oblige*,⁶⁴ they will find it as easy to get on in the

⁶⁴ *Noblesse oblige*: Nobility obliges; nobility of birth demands nobility of deeds.

world as other people who don't care what they do. Why, if I had not recollected that *noblesse oblige*, I should not have been all alone now." And the poor old lady sighed.

"How was that, ma'am?"

13. "Why, my dear, a gentleman came hither with me, and after we had been here some time, he wanted to marry—in fact, he actually proposed to me. Well, I can't blame him; I was young, and very handsome then, I don't deny: but you see, I could not hear of such a thing, because he was my deceased sister's husband, you see?"

"Of course not, ma'am," said Tom; though, of course, he knew nothing about it. "She was very much diseased, I suppose?"

14. "You do not understand me, my dear. I mean, that being a lady, and with right and honorable feelings, as our house always has had, I felt it my duty to snub him, and howk him, and peck him continually, to keep him at his proper distance and, to tell the truth, I once pecked him a little too hard, poor fellow, and he tumbled backward off the rock, and—really, it was very unfortunate, but it was not my fault—a shark coming by saw him flapping, and snapped him up. And since then I have lived all alone:

"With a fal-lal-la-lady."

And soon I shall be gone, my little dear, and nobody will miss me; and then the poor stone will be left all alone."

"But, please, which is the way to Shiny Wall?" said Tom.

15. "Oh, you must go, my little dear—you must go. Let me see—I am sure—that is—really, my poor old brains are getting quite puzzled. Do you know, my little dear, I am afraid, if you want to know, you must ask some of these vulgar birds about, for I have quite forgotten."

And the poor old Gairfowl began to cry tears of pure oil; and Tom was quite sorry for her; and for himself too, for he was at his wits' end whom to ask.

But by there came a flock of petrels, who are Mother Carey's own chickens; and Tom thought them much prettier than Lady Gairfowl, and so perhaps they were; for Mother Carey had had a great deal of fresh experience between the time that she invented the Gairfowl and the time that she invented them. They flitted along like a flock of black swallows, and hopped and skipped from wave to wave, lifting up their little feet behind them so daintily, and whistling to each other so tenderly, that Tom fell in love with them at once, and called them to know the way to Shiny Wall.

16. "Shiny Wall? Do you want Shiny Wall? Then come with us, and we will show you. We are Mother Carey's own chickens, and she sends us out over all the seas, to show the good birds the way home."

Tom was delighted, and swam off to them, after he had made his bow to the Gairfowl. But she would not return his bow: but held herself bolt upright, and wept tears of oil as she sang:

"And so the poor stone was left all alone ;
With a fal-lal-la-lady."

17. And now Tom was all agog to start for Shiny Wall; but the petrels said no. They must go first to Allfowlsness, and wait there for the great gathering of all the sea-birds, before they start for their summer breeding-places far away in the Northern isles; and there they would be sure to find some birds which were going to Shiny Wall: but where Allfowlsness was, he must promise never to tell, lest men should go there and shoot the birds, and stuff them, and put them into stupid museums, instead of leaving them to play and breed and work in Mother Carey's water-garden, where they ought to be.

So where Allfowlsness is nobody must know; and all that is to be said about it is, that Tom waited there many days.

18. And after a while the birds began to gather at Allfowlsness, in thousands and tens of thousands, blackening all the air; swans and brant geese, harlequins and eiders, harolds and garga-neys, smews and goosanders, divers and loons, grebes and dovebies, auks and razor-bills, gannets and petrels, skuas and terns, with gulls beyond all naming or numbering; and they paddled and washed and splashed and combed and brushed themselves on the sand, till the shore was white with feathers; and they quacked and clucked and gabbled and chattered and screamed and whooped as they talked over matters with their friends, and settled where they were to go and breed that summer, till you might have heard them ten miles off.

19. Then the petrels asked this bird and that whether they would take Tom to Shiny Wall: but one set was going to Sutherland, and one to the Shetlands, and one to Norway, and one to Spitzbergen, and one to Iceland, and one to Greenland: but none would go to Shiny Wall. So the good-natured petrels said that they would show him part of the way themselves, but they were only going as far as Jan Mayen's Land; and after that he must shift for himself.

And as Tom and the petrels went northeastward, it began to blow right hard.

20. And at last they saw an ugly sight—the black side of a great ship, water-logged in the trough of the sea. Her funnel and her masts were overboard, and swayed and surged under her lee; her decks were swept as clean as a barn floor, and there was no living soul on board.

The petrels flew up to her, and wailed round her; for they were very sorry indeed, and also they expected to find some salt pork; and Tom scrambled on board of her and looked round, frightened and sad.

And there, in a little cot, lashed tight under the bulwark, lay a baby fast asleep.

21. He went up to it, and wanted to wake it; but behold, from under the cot out jumped a little black and tan terrier dog, and began barking and snapping at Tom, and would not let him touch the cot.

Tom knew the dog's teeth could not hurt him: but at least it could shove him away, and did; and he and the dog fought and struggled, for he wanted to help the baby, and did not want to throw the poor dog overboard: but as they were struggling, there came a tall green sea, and walked in over the weather side of the ship, and swept them all into the waves.

22. "Oh, the baby, the baby!" screamed Tom:

but the next moment he did not scream at all; for he saw the cot settling down through the green water, with the baby, smiling in it, fast asleep; and he saw the fairies come up from below, and carry baby and cradle gently down in their soft arms; and then he knew it was all right, and that there would be a new water-baby in St. Brandan's Isle.

23. And the poor little dog?

Why, after he had kicked and coughed a little, he sneezed so hard that he sneezed himself clean out of his skin, and turned into a water-dog, and jumped and danced round Tom, and ran over the crests of the waves, and snapped at the jelly-fish and the mackerel, and followed Tom the whole way to the Other-end-of-Nowhere.

Then they went on again, till they began to see the peak of Jan Mayen's Land, standing up like a white sugar-loaf, two miles above the clouds.

And there they fell in with a whole flock of molly-mocks,⁶⁵ who were feeding on a dead whale.

24. "These are the fellows to show you the way," said Mother Carey's chickens; "we cannot help you farther north. We don't like to get among the ice pack, for fear it should nip our toes: but the mollys dare fly anywhere."

So the petrels called to the mollys: but they

⁶⁵ Mollymocks (Mallemawks): Sea birds found in high latitudes.

were so busy and greedy, gobbling and pecking and spluttering and fighting over the blubber, that they did not take the least notice.

“Come, come,” said the petrels, “you lazy, greedy lubbers, this young gentleman is going to Mother Carey, and if you don’t attend on him, you won’t earn your discharge from her, you know.”

“Greedy we are,” says a great fat old molly, “but lazy we aint; and, as for lubbers, we’re no more lubbers than you. Let’s have a look at the lad.”

25. And he flapped right into Tom’s face, and stared at him in the most impudent way (for the mollies are audacious fellows, as all whalers know), and then asked him where he hailed from, and what land he sighted last.

And, when Tom told him, he seemed pleased, and said he was a good-plucked one to have got so far.

“Come along, lads,” he said to the rest, “and give this little chap a cast over the pack, for Mother Carey’s sake. We’ve eaten blubber enough for to-day, and we’ll e’en work out a bit of our time by helping the lad.”

26. So the mollies took Tom up on their backs, and flew off with him, laughing and joking, and

set him and his dog down at the foot of Shiny Wall.

“And where is the gate?” asked Tom.

“There is no gate,” said the mollys.

“No gate?” cried Tom, aghast.

“None; never a crack of one, and that’s the whole of the secret, as better fellows, lad, than you have found to their cost; and if there had been, they’d have killed by now every right whale that swims the sea.”

“What am I to do, then?”

“Dive under the floe,⁶⁶ to be sure, if you have pluck.”

“I’ve not come so far to turn now,” said Tom; “so here goes for a header.”

“A lucky voyage to you, lad,” said the mollys; “we knew you were one of the right sort. So good-by.”

“Why don’t you come too?” asked Tom.

27. But the mollys only wailed sadly, “We can’t go yet, we can’t go yet,” and flew away over the pack.

So Tom dived under the great white gate which never was opened yet, and went on in black darkness, at the bottom of the sea, for seven days and seven nights. And yet he was not a bit fright-

⁶⁶ Floe : A mass of floating polar ice.

ened. Why should he be? He was a brave English lad, whose business is to go out and see all the world.

28. And at last he saw the light, and clear, clear water overhead; and up he came a thousand fathoms, among clouds of sea-moths, which fluttered round his head. There were moths with pink heads and wings and opal bodies, that flapped about slowly; moths with brown wings, that flapped about quickly; yellow shrimps, that hopped and skipped most quickly of all; and jellies of all the colors in the world, that neither hopped nor skipped, but only dawdled and yawned, and would not get out of his way. The dog snapped at them till his jaws were tired; but Tom hardly minded them at all, he was so eager to get to the top of the water and see the pool where the good whales go.

29. And a very large pool it was, miles and miles across, though the air was so clear that the ice cliffs on the opposite side looked as if they were close at hand. All round it the ice cliffs rose, in walls and spires and battlements, and caves and bridges, and stories and galleries, in which the ice-fairies live, and drive away the storms and clouds, that Mother Carey's pool may lie calm from year's end to year's end. And the sun acted policeman, and walked round outside every day, peeping just

over the top of the ice wall, to see that all went right; and now and then he played conjuring tricks, or had an exhibition of fireworks, to amuse the ice-fairies. For he would make himself into four or five suns at once, or paint the sky with rings and crosses and crescents of white fire, and stick himself in the middle of them, and wink at the fairies; and I dare say they were very much amused; for anything's fun in the country.

30. And there the good whales lay, the happy, sleepy beasts, upon the still, oily sea. They were all right whales, you must know, and finners, and razor-backs, and bottle-noses, and spotted sea-unicorns with long ivory horns. But the sperm whales are such raging, ramping, roaring, rum-bustious fellows, that, if Mother Carey let them in, there would be no more peace in Peacepool.

Tom swam up to the nearest whale, and asked the way to Mother Carey.

"There she sits in the middle," said the whale.

Tom looked; but he could see nothing in the middle of the pool, but one peaked iceberg: and he said so.

"That's Mother Carey," said the whale, "as you will find when you get to her. There she sits making old beasts into new all the year round."

31. "How does she do that?"

“That’s her concern, not mine,” said the old whale.

“I suppose,” said Tom, “she cuts up a great whale like you into a whole shoal of porpoises?”

At which the old whale laughed violently, and Tom went on to the iceberg, wondering.

And, when he came near it, it took the form of the grandest old lady he had ever seen—a white marble lady, sitting on a white marble throne. And from the foot of the throne there swum away, out and out into the sea, millions of newborn creatures, of more shapes and colors than man ever dreamed. And they were Mother Carey’s children, whom she makes out of the sea-water all day long.

32. He expected, of course,—like some grown people who ought to know better,—to find her snipping, piecing, fitting, stitching, cobbling, basting, filing, planing, hammering, turning, polishing, molding, measuring, chiseling, clipping, and so forth, as men do when they go to work to make anything.

But, instead of that, she sat quite still with her chin upon her hand, looking down into the sea with two great grand blue eyes, as blue as the sea itself. Her hair was as white as the snow—for she was

very, very old—in fact, as old as anything which you are likely to come across, except the difference between right and wrong.

33. And, when she saw Tom, she looked at him very kindly.

“What do you want, my little man? It is long since I have seen a water-baby here.”

Tom told her his errand, and asked the way to the Other-end-of-Nowhere.

“You ought to know yourself, for you have been there already.”

“Have I, ma’am? I’m sure I forget all about it.”

“Then look at me.”

And, as Tom looked into her great blue eyes, he recollected the way perfectly.

Now, was not that strange?

34. “Thank you, ma’am,” said Tom. “Then I won’t trouble your ladyship any more; I hear you are very busy.”

“I am never more busy than I am now,” she said, without stirring a finger.

“I heard, ma’am, that you were always making new beasts out of old.”

“So people fancy. But I am not going to trouble myself to make things, my little dear. I sit here and make them make themselves.”

“You are a clever fairy, indeed,” thought Tom. And he was quite right.

“And now, my pretty little man,” said Mother Carey, “you are sure you know the way to the Other-end-of-Nowhere?”

Tom thought; and behold, he had forgotten it utterly.

“That is because you took your eyes off me.”

35. Tom looked at her again, and recollected; and then looked away, and forgot in an instant.

“But what am I to do, ma’am? For I can’t keep looking at you when I am somewhere else.”

“You must do without me, as most people have to do, for nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of their lives; and look at the dog instead; for he knows the way well enough, and will not forget it. Besides, you may meet some very queer-tempered people there, who will not let you pass without this passport of mine, which you must hang round your neck and take care of; and, of course, as the dog will always go behind you, you must go the whole way backward.”

“Backward!” cried Tom. “Then I shall not be able to see my way.”

36. “On the contrary, if you look forward, you will not see a step before you, and be certain to go wrong; but, if you look behind you, and watch

carefully whatever you have passed, and especially keep your eye on the dog, who goes by instinct, and therefore can't go wrong, then you will know what is coming next, as plainly as if you saw it in a looking glass."

Tom was very much astonished: but he obeyed her, for he had learnt always to believe what the fairies told him.

CHAPTER VIII AND LAST

1. Now, as soon as Tom had left Peacepool, he came to the white lap of the great sea-mother, ten thousand fathoms deep; where she makes world-pap all day long, for the steam-giants to knead, and the fire-giants to bake, till it has risen and hardened into mountain-loaves and island-cakes.

And there Tom was very near being kneaded up in the world-pap, and turned into a fossil water-baby.

For, as he walked along in the silence of the sea-twilight, on the soft white ocean floor, he was aware of a hissing, and a roaring, and a thumping, and a pumping, as of all the steam-engines in the world at once. And, when he came near, the water grew boiling hot; not that that hurt him in the least; but it also grew as foul as gruel; and

every moment he stumbled over dead shells, and fish, and sharks, and seals, and whales, which had been killed by the hot water.

2. And at last he came to the great sea-serpent himself, lying dead at the bottom; and as he was too thick to scramble over, Tom had to walk round him three-quarters of a mile and more, which put him out of his path sadly; and, when he had got round, he came to the place called Stop. And there he stopped, and just in time.

For he was on the edge of a vast hole in the bottom of the sea, up which was rushing and roaring clear steam enough to work all the engines in the world at once; so clear, indeed, that it was quite light at moments; and Tom could see almost up to the top of the water above, and down below into the pit for nobody knows how far.

3. But, as soon as he bent his head over the edge, he got such a rap on the nose from pebbles, that he jumped back again; for the steam, as it rushed up, rasped away the sides of the hole, and hurled it up into the sea in a shower of mud and gravel and ashes; and then it spread all around, and sank again, and covered in the dead fish so fast that before Tom had stood there five minutes he was buried in silt up to his ankles, and began to be afraid that he should have been buried alive.

And perhaps he would have been, but that while he was thinking, the whole piece of ground on which he stood was torn off and blown upward, and away flew Tom a mile up through the sea, wondering what was coming next.

4. At last he stopped—thump! and found himself tight in the legs of the most wonderful boggy which he had ever seen.

It had I don't know how many wings, as big as the sails of a windmill, and spread out in a ring like them; and with them it hovered over the steam which rushed up, as a ball hovers over the top of a fountain. And for every wing above it had a leg below, with a claw like a comb at the tip, and a nostril at the root; and in the middle it had no stomach and one eye; and as for its mouth, that was all on one side, as the madreporiform tubercle in a star-fish is. Well, it was a very strange beast; but no stranger than some dozens which you may see.

“What do you want here,” it cried peevishly, “getting in my way?” and it tried to drop Tom: but he held on tight to its claws, thinking himself safer where he was.

5. So Tom told him who he was, and what his errand was. And the thing winked its one eye, and sneered:

“I am too old to be taken in in that way. You are come after gold—I know you are.”

“Gold! What is gold?” And really Tom did not know; but the suspicious old bogy would not believe him.

But after a while Tom began to understand a little. For, as the vapors came up out of the hole, the bogy smelt them with his nostrils, and combed them and sorted them with his combs; and then, when they steamed up through them against his wings, they were changed into showers and streams of metal. From one wing fell gold-dust, and from another silver, and from another copper, and from another tin, and from another lead, and so on, and sank into the soft mud, into veins and cracks, and hardened there. Whereby it comes to pass that the rocks are full of metal.

6. But, all of a sudden, somebody shut off the steam below, and the hole was left empty in an instant: and then down rushed the water into the hole, in such a whirlpool that the bogy spun round and round as fast as a teetotum. But that was all in his day's work, like a fair fall with the hounds; so all he did was to say to Tom:

“Now is your time, youngster, to get down, if you are in earnest, which I don't believe.”

“You'll soon see,” said Tom; and away he

went, as bold as Baron Munchausen,⁶⁷ and shot down the rushing cataract like a salmon at Ballisdare.

And, when he got to the bottom, he swam till he was washed on shore safe upon the Other-End-of-Nowhere; and he found it, to his surprise, as most other people do, much more like This-End-of-Somewhere than he had been in the habit of expecting.

7. After innumerable adventures, each more wonderful than the last, he saw before him a huge building.

Tom walked toward this great building, wondering what it was, and having a strange fancy that he might find Mr. Grimes inside it, till he saw running toward him, and shouting "Stop!" three or four people, who, when they came nearer, were nothing else than policemen's truncheons,⁶⁸ running along without legs or arms.

Tom was not astonished. Neither was he frightened; for he had been doing no harm.

8. So he stopped; and, when the foremost truncheon came up and asked his business, he showed Mother Carey's pass; and the truncheon looked at it in the oddest fashion; for he had one

⁶⁷ Baron Munchausen (1720-1797): A Hanoverian soldier noted for his extravagant tales of adventure; to him were attributed the *Tales of Munchausen*, by their author, Rudolph Raspe.

⁶⁸ Truncheons: Clubs.

eye in the middle of his upper end, so that when he looked at anything, being quite stiff, he had to slope himself, and poke himself, till it was a wonder why he did not tumble over; but, being quite full of the spirit of justice (as all policemen, and their truncheons, ought to be), he was always in a position of stable equilibrium, whichever way he put himself.

“All right—pass on,” said he at last. And then he added: “I had better go with you, young man.” And Tom had no objection, for such company was both respectable and safe; so the truncheon coiled its thong neatly round its handle, to prevent tripping itself up—for the thong had got loose in running—and marched on by Tom’s side.

“Why have you no policeman to carry you?” asked Tom, after a while.

9. “Because we are not like those clumsy-made truncheons in the land-world, which cannot go without having a whole man to carry them about. We do our own work for ourselves; and do it very well, though I say it who should not.”

“Then why have you a thong to your handle?” asked Tom.

“To hang ourselves up by, of course, when we are off duty.”

Tom had got his answer, and had no more to

say, till they came up to the great iron door of the prison. And there the truncheon knocked twice, with its own head.

10. A wicket in the door opened, and out looked a tremendous old brass blunderbuss⁶⁹ charged up to the muzzle with slugs, who was the porter; and Tom started back a little at the sight of him.

“What case is this?” he asked in a deep voice, out of his broad bell mouth.

“If you please, sir, it is no case; only a young gentleman from her ladyship, who wants to see Grimes, the master-sweep.”

“Grimes?” said the blunderbuss. And he pulled in his muzzle, perhaps to look over his prison-lists.

“Grimes is up chimney No. 345,” he said from inside. “So the young gentleman had better go on to the roof.”

11. Tom looked up at the enormous wall, which seemed at least ninety miles high, and wondered how he should ever get up: but, when he hinted that to the truncheon, it settled the matter in a moment. For it whisked round, and gave him such a shove behind as sent him up to the roof in no time, with his little dog under his arm.

12. And there he walked along the leads, till

⁶⁹ Blunderbuss : An old-fashioned gun.

he met another truncheon, and told him his errand.

“Very good,” it said. “Come along: but it will be of no use. He is the most unremorseful, hard-hearted, foul-mouthed fellow I have in charge; and thinks about nothing but beer and pipes, which are not allowed here, of course.”

So they walked along over the leads, and very sooty they were, and Tom thought the chimneys must want sweeping very much. But he was surprised to see that the soot did not stick to his feet, or dirty them in the least. Neither did the live coals, which were lying about in plenty, burn him.

13. And at last they came to chimney No. 345. Out of the top of it, his head and shoulders just showing, stuck poor Mr. Grimes, so sooty, and bleared, and ugly, that Tom could hardly bear to look at him. And in his mouth was a pipe; but it was not a-light; though he was pulling at it with all his might.

“Attention, Mr. Grimes,” said the truncheon; “here is a gentleman come to see you.”

But Mr. Grimes only said bad words; and kept grumbling, “My pipe won’t draw. My pipe won’t draw.”

“Keep a civil tongue, and attend!” said the

truncheon; and popped up just like Punch,⁷⁰ hitting Grimes such a crack over the head with itself, that his brains rattled inside like a dried walnut in its shell. He tried to get his hands out, and rub the place: but he could not, for they were stuck fast in the chimney. Now he was forced to attend.

14. "Hey!" he said, "why, it's Tom! I suppose you have come here to laugh at me, you spiteful little atomy?"⁷¹

Tom assured him he had not, but only wanted to help him.

"I don't want anything except beer, and that I can't get; and a light to this bothering pipe, and that I can't get either."

"I'll get you one," said Tom; and he took up a live coal (there were plenty lying about) and put it to Grimes' pipe: but it went out instantly.

"It's no use," said the truncheon, leaning itself up against the chimney and looking on. "I tell you, it is no use. His heart is so cold that it freezes everything that comes near him. You will see that presently, plain enough."

15. "Oh, of course, it's my fault. Everything's always my fault," said Grimes. "Now don't go to hit me again" (for the truncheon started up-

⁷⁰ **Punch** : The clown of a puppet show.

⁷¹ **Atomy** : An atom, a mite.

right, and looked very wicked); “you know, if my arms were only free, you daren’t hit me then.”

The truncheon leant back against the chimney, and took no notice of the personal insult, like a well-trained policeman as it was, though he was ready enough to avenge any transgression against morality or order.

“But can’t I help you in any other way? Can’t I help you to get out of this chimney?” said Tom.

“No,” interposed the truncheon; “he has come to the place where everybody must help themselves; and he will find it out, I hope, before he has done with me.”

“Oh, yes,” said Grimes, “of course it’s me. Did I ask to be brought here into the prison? Did I ask to be set to sweep your foul chimneys? Did I ask to have lighted straw put under me to make me go up? Did I ask to stick fast in the very first chimney of all, because it was so shamefully clogged up with soot? Did I ask to stay here—I don’t know how long—a hundred years, I do believe, and never get my pipe, nor my beer, nor nothing fit for a beast, let alone a man?”

16. “No,” answered a solemn voice behind. “No more did Tom, when you behaved to him in the very same way.”

It was Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid. And, when the

truncheon saw her, it started bolt upright—Attention!—and made such a low bow that, if it had not been full of the spirit of justice, it must have tumbled on its end, and probably hurt its one eye. And Tom made his bow, too.

17. “Oh, ma’am,” he said, “don’t think about me; that’s all past and gone, and good times and bad times and all times pass over. But may not I help poor Mr. Grimes? Mayn’t I try and get some of these bricks away, that he may move his arms?”

“You may try, of course,” she said.

So Tom pulled and tugged at the bricks: but he could not move one. And then he tried to wipe Mr. Grimes’ face: but the soot would not come off.

“Oh, dear!” he said. “I have come all this way, through all these terrible places, to help you, and now I am of no use at all.”

“You had best leave me alone,” said Grimes; “you are a good-natured forgiving little chap, and that’s truth; but you’d best be off. The hail’s coming on soon, and it will beat the eyes out of your little head.”

“What hail?”

18. “Why, hail that falls every evening here; and, till it comes close to me it’s like so much warm rain; but then it turns to hail over my head, and knocks me about like small shot.”

“That hail will never come any more,” said the strange lady. “I have told you before what it was. It was your mother’s tears, those which she shed when she prayed for you by her bedside; but your cold heart froze it into hail. But she is gone to heaven now, and will weep no more for her graceless son.”

Then Grimes was silent awhile; and then he looked very sad.

“So my old mother’s gone, and I never there to speak to her! Ah! a good woman she was, and might have been a happy one, in her little school there in Vendale, if it hadn’t been for me and my bad ways.”

19. “Did she keep the school in Vendale?” asked Tom. And then he told Grimes all the story of his going to her house, and how she could not abide the sight of a chimney-sweep, and then how kind she was, and how he turned into a water-baby.

“Ah!” said Grimes, “good reason she had to hate the sight of a chimney-sweep. I ran away from her and took up with the sweeps, and never let her know where I was, nor sent her a penny to help her, and now it’s too late—too late!” said Mr. Grimes.

And he began crying and blubbering like a great

baby, till his pipe dropped out of his mouth, and broke all to bits.

20. "Oh, dear, if I was but a little chap in Vendale again, to see the clear beck, and the apple-orchard, and the yew-hedge, how different I would go on! But it's too late now. So you go along, you kind little chap, and don't stand to look at a man crying, that's old enough to be your father, and never feared the face of man, nor of worse neither. But I'm beat now, and beat I must be. I've made my bed, and I must lie on it. Foul I would be, and foul I am, as an Irishwoman said to me once; and little I heeded it. It's all my own fault: but it's too late." And he cried so bitterly that Tom began crying too.

"Never too late," said the fairy, in such a strange soft new voice that Tom looked up at her; and she was so beautiful for the moment that Tom half fancied she was her sister.

21. No more was it too late. For, as poor Grimes cried and blubbered on, his own tears did what his mother's could not do, and Tom's could not do, and nobody's on earth could do for him; for they washed the soot off his face and off his clothes; and then they washed the mortar away from between the bricks; and the chimney crumbled down; and Grimes began to get out of it.

Up jumped the truncheon, and was going to hit him on the crown a tremendous thump, and drive him down again like a cork into a bottle. But the strange lady put it aside.

“Will you obey me if I give you a chance?”

“As you please, ma’am. You’re stronger than me—that I know too well; and wiser than me, I know too well also. And, as for being my own master, I’ve fared ill enough with that as yet. So whatever your ladyship pleases to order me; for I’m beat, and that’s the truth.”

22. “Be it so then—you may come out. But remember, disobey me again, and into a worse place still you go.”

“I beg pardon, ma’am, but I never disobeyed you that I know of. I never had the honor of setting eyes upon you till I came to these ugly quarters.”

“Never saw me? Who said to you, Those that will be foul, foul they will be?”

Grimes looked up; and Tom looked up too; for the voice was that of the Irishwoman who met them the day that they went out together to Harth-over. “I gave you your warning then: but you gave it yourself a thousand times before and since. Every bad word that you said—every cruel and mean thing that you did—every time that you got

tipsy—every day that you went dirty—you were disobeying me, whether you knew it or not.”

“If I’d only known, ma’am——”

“You knew well enough that you were disobeying something, though you did not know it was me. But come out and take your chance. Perhaps it may be your last.”

23. So Grimes stepped out of the chimney, and really, if it had not been for the scars on his face, he looked as clean and respectable as a master-sweep need look.

“Take him away,” said she to the truncheon, “and give him his ticket-of-leave.”⁷²

“And what is he to do, ma’am?”

“Get him to sweep out the crater of Etna; he will find some very steady men working out their time there, who will teach him his business: but mind, if that crater gets choked again, and there is an earthquake in consequence, bring them all to me, and I shall investigate the case very severely.”

So the truncheon marched off Mr. Grimes, looking as meek as a drowned worm.

And for aught I know, or do not know, he is sweeping the crater of Etna to this very day.

⁷² Ticket-of-leave: Permission granted a prisoner to go at large before the end of his term on condition of good behavior.

“And now,” said the fairy to Tom, “your work here is done. You may as well go back again.”

“I should be glad enough to go,” said Tom, “but how am I to get up that great hole again, now the steam has stopped blowing?”

“I will take you up the backstairs: but I must bandage your eyes first; for I never allow anybody to see those backstairs of mine.”

24. So she tied the bandage on his eyes with one hand, and with the other she took it off.

“Now,” she said, “you are safe up the stairs.” Tom opened his eyes very wide, and his mouth too; for he had not, as he thought, moved a single step. But, when he looked round him, there could be no doubt that he was safe up the backstairs, whatsoever they may be, which no man is going to tell you, for the plain reason that no man knows.

The first thing which Tom saw was the black cedars, high and sharp against the rosy dawn; and St. Brandan’s Isle reflected double in the still, broad silver sea. The wind sang softly in the cedars, and the water sang among the caves: the sea-birds sang as they streamed out into the ocean, and the land-birds as they built among the boughs; and the air was so full of song that it stirred St. Brandan and his hermits, as they slumbered in the shade; and they moved their good old lips, and

sang their morning hymn amid their dreams. But among all the songs one came across the water more sweet and clear than all; for it was the song of a young girl's voice.

25. And what was the song which she sang? Ah, my little man, I am too old to sing that song, and you too young to understand it. But have patience, and keep your eye single, and your hands clean, and you will learn some day to sing it yourself, without needing any man to teach you.

And as Tom neared the island, there sat upon a rock the most graceful creature that ever was seen, looking down, with her chin upon her hand, and paddling with her feet in the water. And when they came to her she looked up, and behold it was Ellie.

"Oh, Miss Ellie," said he, "how you are grown!"

"Oh, Tom," said she, "how you are grown too!"

And no wonder; they were both quite grown up—he into a tall man, and she into a beautiful woman.

"Perhaps I may be grown," she said. "I have had time enough; for I have been sitting here waiting for you many a hundred years, till I thought you were never coming."

26. "Many a hundred years?" thought Tom; but he had seen so much in his travels that he had quite given up being astonished; and, indeed, he could think of nothing but Ellie. So he stood and looked at Ellie, and Ellie looked at him; and they liked the employment so much that they stood and looked for seven years more, and neither spoke nor stirred.

At last they heard the fairy say: "Attention, children. Are you never going to look at me again?"

"We have been looking at you all this while," they said. And so they thought they had been.

"Then look at me once more," said she.

They looked—and both of them cried out at once, "Oh, who are you, after all?"

"You are our dear Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby."

"No, you are good Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid; but you are grown quite beautiful now!"

"To you," said the fairy. "But look again."

"You are Mother Carey," said Tom, in a very low, solemn voice; for he had found out something which made him very happy, and yet frightened him more than all that he had ever seen.

"But you are grown quite young again."

"To you," said the fairy. "Look again."

“ You are the Irishwoman who met me the day I went to Harthover! ”

And when they looked she was neither of them, and yet all of them at once.

“ My name is written in my eyes, if you have eyes to see it there.”

27. And they looked into her great, deep, soft eyes, and they changed again and again into every hue, as the light changes in a diamond.

“ Now read my name,” said she, at last.

And her eyes flashed, for one moment, clear, white, blazing light: but the children could not read her name; for they were dazzled, and hid their faces in their hands.

“ Not yet, young things, not yet,” said she, smiling; and then she turned to Ellie.

“ You may take him home with you now on Sundays, Ellie. He has won his spurs in the great battle, and become fit to go with you and be a man; because he has done the thing he did not like.”

“ And of course Tom married Ellie? ”

My dear child, what a silly notion! Don't you know that no one ever marries in a fairy tale, under the rank of a prince or a princess?

MORAL

And now, my dear little man, what should we learn from this parable?

We should learn thirty-seven or thirty-nine things, I am not exactly sure which: but one thing, at least, we may learn, and that is this—when we see efts in the pond, never to throw stones at them, or catch them with crooked pins, or put them into vivariums with sticklebacks, that the sticklebacks may prick them in their poor little stomachs, and make them jump out of the glass into somebody's work-box, and so come to a bad end. For these efts are nothing else but the water-babies who are stupid and dirty, and will not learn their lessons and keep themselves clean; and, therefore (as comparative anatomists will tell you fifty years hence, though they are not learned enough to tell you now), their skulls grow flat, their jaws grow out, and their brains grow small, and their tails grow long, and they lose all their ribs (which I am sure you would not like to do), and their skins grow dirty and spotted, and they never get into the clear rivers, much less into the great wide sea, but hang about in dirty ponds, and live in the mud, and eat worms, as they deserve to do.

But that is no reason why you should ill-use them: but only why you should pity them, and be kind to them, and hope that some day they will wake up, and be ashamed of their nasty, dirty, lazy, stupid life, and try to amend, and become something better once more. For, perhaps, if they do so, then after 379,423 years, nine months, thirteen days, two hours, and twenty-one minutes (for aught that appears to the contrary), if they work very hard and wash very hard all that time, their brains may grow bigger, and their jaws grow smaller, and their ribs come back, and their tails wither off, and they will turn into water-babies again, and perhaps after that into land-babies; and after that perhaps into grown men.

You know they won't? Very well, I dare say you know best. But you see, some folks have a great liking for those poor little efts. They never did anybody any harm, or could if they tried; and their only fault is, that they do no good—any more than some thousands of their betters. But what with ducks, and what with pike, and what with sticklebacks, and what with water-beetles, and what with naughty boys, they are “sae sair hadden doun,” as the Scotsmen say, that it is a wonder how they live; and some folks can't help hoping, with good Bishop Butler, that they may have an-

other chance, to make things fair and even, somewhere, somewhen, somehow.

Meanwhile, do you learn your lessons, and thank God that you have plenty of cold water to wash in; and wash in it too, like a true Englishman. And then, if my story is not true, something better is; and if I am not quite right, still you will be, as long as you stick to hard work and cold water.

But remember always, as I told you at first, that this is all a fairy tale, and only fun and pretense; and, therefore, you are not to believe a word of it, even if it is true.

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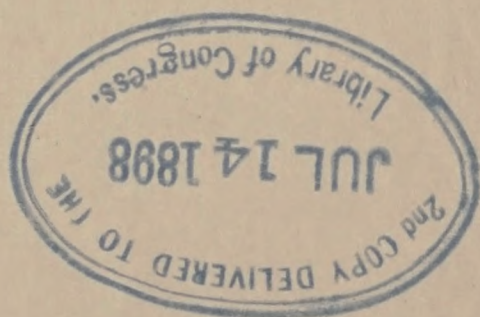
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